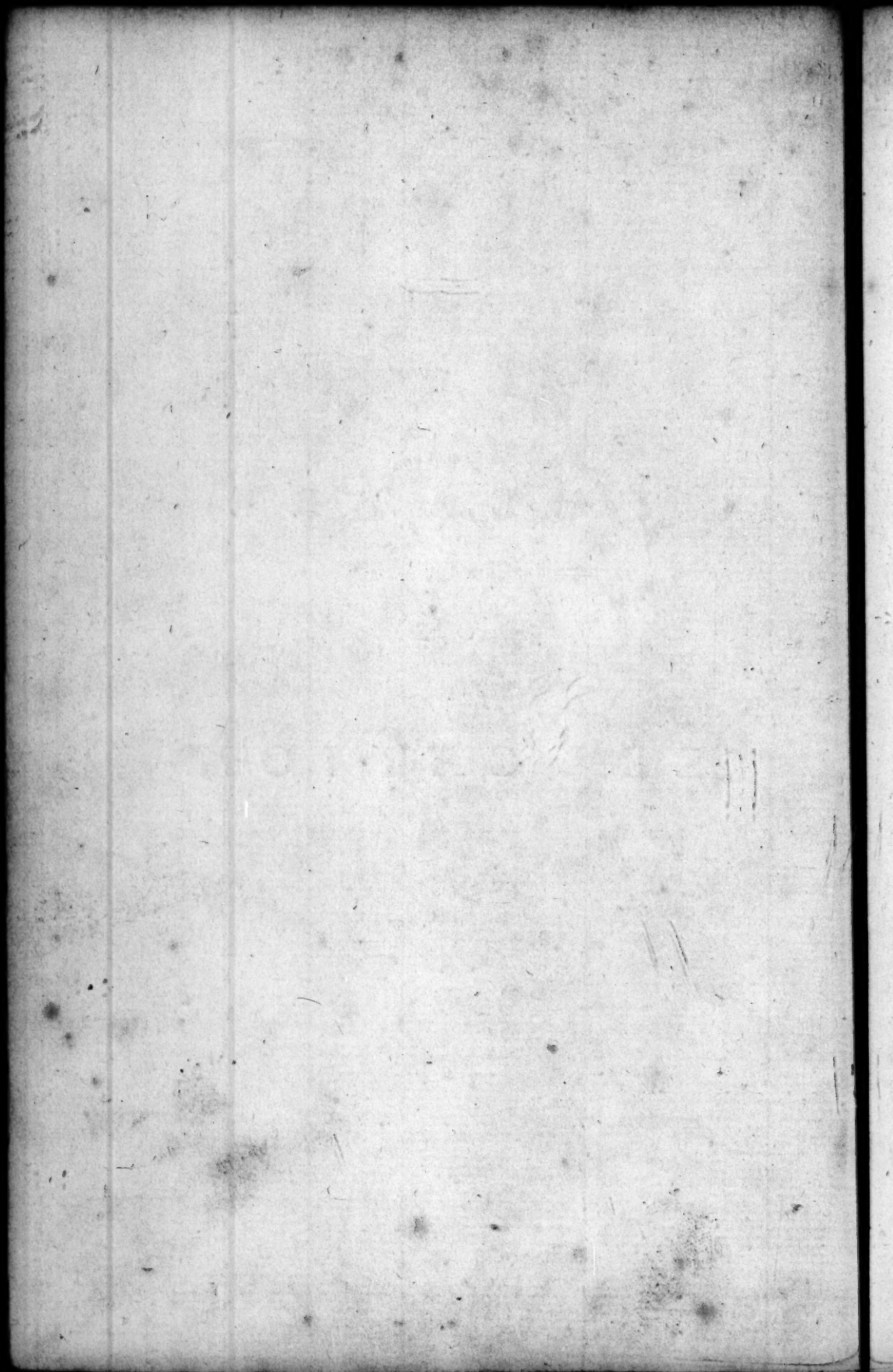


T H E A T R E

O F

E D U C A T I O N.



T H E A T R E
O F
E D U C A T I O N.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
O F
T H E C O U N T E S S D E G E N L I S.

Leçon commence, exemple achevé.

LA MOTTE, *Fable de L'Aigle et L'Aiglon.*

I N F O U R V O L U M E S.

V O L. II.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. CADELL, and P. ELMSLEY, in the
Strand; and T. DURHAM, Charing-Cross.

MDCCLXXXI.

THE

EDUCATION

49.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE subject of the following little piece is not a work of fancy. The Author saw the worthy Catherine Aglebert at Spa three years ago, and learnt the history from the poor blind woman herself: All the particulars of this Comedy are strictly true; even the name of the woman, the names of her children, and the profession of her husband are preserved. It is likewise true, that an English Lady who was at that time in Spa, behaved very generously to that respectable family.

THE PERSONS.

MRS. AGLEBELT, *the wife of a Shoemaker.*

JENNET, }

MARY, } *Mrs. Aglebert's daughters.*

LOUISA, }

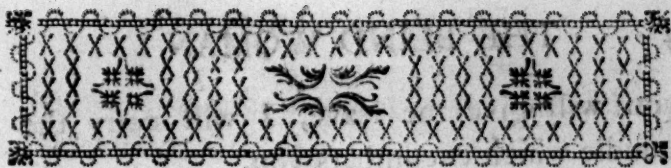
GOTO, *a blind woman.*

LADY SEYMOUR, *an English Lady.*

FELICIA, *a French Lady.*

FATHER ANTHONY *a Capuchin Friar.*

The Scene is at the Waters of Spa.



T H E
BLIND WOMAN OF SPA.
A C O M E D Y.

Le Conquerant est craint, le Sage est estimé,
Mais le Bienfaisant charme, & lui seul est aimé.
VOLTAIRE.

SCENE FIRST.

The Stage represents a walk.

MRS. AGLEBERT, JENNET.

MRS. Aglebert, *holding a bundle.*

Let us stop a little, the weather is so fine!—

JENNET.

We are almost at home mother, and if

A ij

THE BLIND WOMAN

you will give me leave, I will carry the bundle which encumbers you.

MRS. AGLEBERT.

No, no, it is too heavy. It is our provision for to-morrow and Sunday.

JENNET.

There is nothing but potatoes!—

MRS. AGLEBERT.

Well, Jennet?—

JENNET.

For these eighteen months we have had no other food but potatoes.

MRS. AGLEBERT.

My child, when people are poor—

JENNET.

You was not so eighteen months ago mother? We made such good bread and pies, and cakes.—

MRS. AGLEBERT.

Ah, if you knew my reasons!—But

Jennet, you are too young to comprehend these things.

JENNET.

Too young ! I am almost fifteen.

MRS. AGLEBERT.

Your heart is good, and I will tell you all one of these days.

JENNET.

Ah mother ! tell me now.——

MRS. AGLEBERT.

Hush, I hear a noise, here are some ladies coming ——

JENNET.

Ha, mother !

MRS. AGLEBERT.

What is the matter ?——

JENNET.

It is she ; it is the lady that gave my sisters and I, our new gowns.

MRS. AGLEBERT.

Did you not go and thank her this morning?

JENNET.

Yes, mother.

MRS. AGLEBERT.

Now let us begone ! and the rather as our poor blind girl Goto has not had a walk to-day, and I dare say is in expectation of your coming. Come, you shall lead her to the Capuchin garden, where I will join you when my work is done. Come then.—

JENNET.

I will follow you mother. (*Mrs. Aglebert goes before, Jennet slackens her pace. Lady Seymour and Felicia pass by her, without observing her. Jennet looks at Felicia, and says.*) She did not see me ; I am sorry for it, because I greatly love her: (*She runs to overtake her mother.*)

S C E N E II.

LADY SEYMOUR, FELICIA.

LADY SEYMOUR.

There is no moving a step in this place without meeting some unhappy wretches!—It grieves me to the heart.—

FELICIA.

You have such sensibility!—besides, I think in general the English women are more compassionate than we; they have less whim, less coquetry; and coquetry stifles and destroys every worthy sentiment.

LADY SEYMOUR.

What you said just now reminds me of an incident with which I was struck this morning. You know the Viscountess Roselle?

FELICIA.

A little.

LADY SEYMOUR.

I met her about two hours ago in the square; there was a poor old lame beggar

A iij.

asked her for charity, and told her his family were dying for want and hunger. The Viscountess hearkened to him with compassion, and pulling her purse out of her pocket was going to give it to him; when unfortunately a person with caps and feathers to sell, drew near. He opened the band-box, and the Viscountess no longer heard the complaint of the old man, but with coldness and inattention. However, to get rid of him, she threw him a trifle and purchased the whole contents of the band-box.

FELICIA.

I am sure your Ladyship relieved the old man,

LADY SEYMOUR.

Hear me to the end. The poor man picked up the money, exclaiming: *My wife and my children shall not die this day!* These few words kindled some emotions in the heart of the Viscountess which is naturally good and humane; she called back the old man,

and after a moment's reflexion,¹ said to the person with whom she had been dealing, you may charge me more for these things I have just now taken, but you must give me credit; the proposal was accepted, and the purse given to the unhappy old man, whose joy and surprise had almost made him expire at the feet of his benefactress. Seated under a tree and concealed by the covered walk, I could easily attend to this interesting scene, which has furnished me with abundant matter for reflexion.

FELICIA.

You should take a journey to Paris, and since you are fond of making reflexions, we will supply you with many other subjects. You will there see for instance, that we value ourselves on imitating you in every thing, except one, I mean benevolence. We carry all your fashions to the extreme, we take to your customs and manners; but we have not yet adopted that generous custom universally established with you, to raise subscriptions for encouraging merit, or relieving the distressed,

THE BLIND WOMAN

LADY SEYMOUR.

So you mimic rather than imitate us, since you make no mention of what renders us truly valuable ; and by overdoing our customs and manners, you turn us into ridicule.

FELICIA.

I hope in time you will communicate some of your virtues to us, as you have already given us your manners. But, my lady, to continue this conversation more at our ease, will you go to the mountain where we shall find shade ?——

LADY SEYMOUR.

I cannot, for I must wait the coming of a person whom I appointed to meet me here.

FELICIA.

Will your business delay you long ?

LADY SEYMOUR.

No, I have but one word to say. Ha, here he comes !

O F S P A. 11

FELICIA.

So, it is Father Anthony! I can guess the motive for such an appointment. You want to be informed where you can best do a generous action, and for such a purpose the venerable Father Anthony is worthy of your confidence. Farewell my Lady, I shall expect you on the mountain.

LADY SEYMOUR.

Where shall I find you?

FELICIA.

In the little temple.

LADY SEYMOUR.

I will be with you in a quarter of an hour.

(Felicia goes out.)

S C E N E III.

Lady SEYMOUR, *Father* ANTHONY.

L A D Y S E Y M O U R.

Poor Father Anthony, with how much pain he walks; what a pity he is so old, he has an excellent heart!—Good day to you Father Anthony; I have been waiting for you an hour.

FATHER ANTHONY *a nosegay in his hand.*

I did not care to leave home without a little nosegay for your Ladyship, and I had not a rose: but at last one of our brothers gave me a couple.—These carnations however are from my own garden.

L A D Y S E Y M O U R.

They are very fine.

FATHER ANTHONY.

O, as to carnations I fear no body—without boasting I have the finest carnations! but my Lady you have not been to see my Garden since I have had carnations in blow!—

I will certainly go. But in your public garden there is always such a number of people, and I am so unfociable.—But Father Anthony let us talk of our affairs.—Have you found out a family for me that are very poor, and very worthy?—

FATHER ANTHONY.

I have found one—Ah! my Lady I have found a treasure:—a woman, her husband, five children, and in such want!—

LADY SEYMOUR.

What employment is the husband?

FATHER ANTHONY.

He is a shoemaker, and his wife makes linen; but she is a woman of such piety and virtue. She is the daughter of a schoolmaster; she reads and writes; she has had an education for her station in life. Then if you knew the charity of which these people are capable, and the good they have done. Ah, my Lady they richly deserve your fifty guineas.

THE BLIND WOMAN

LADY SEYMOUR.

You give me great pleasure, Father;—
well!—

FATHER ANTHONY.

O, it is a long history. In the first place
the husband's name is Aglebert.—But will
you go to his house—you must witness it
to believe all.—

LADY SEYMOUR.

Hear me father; come back to this place
in two hours, and we will go together to these
good people, but in the meantime tell me
their history in two words.

FATHER ANTHONY.

In two words!—It would take me three
quarters of an hour for the bare preamble;
and what is more, I never could tell any thing
in two words.

LADY SEYMOUR.

So I find. Well father, farewell till the
evening, I hear people coming towards us,
and we shall be interrupted.

FATHER ANTHONY.

And for my part, I have some little business; but I will be here with you by seven.

LADY SEYMOUR.

You will find me here. Farewell Father Anthony.

FATHER ANTHONY *makes some steps and returns.*

My Lady, you will come and see my carnations won't you?

LADY SEYMOUR.

Yes, Father Anthony, I promise you, you may depend upon it.

FATHER ANTHONY.

O they are the worthiest people!

LADY SEYMOUR.

Who your carnations.

FATHER ANTHONY.

No, I was speaking of the worthy Agleberts. It is a family of God. (*He moves some steps, turns back, and speaks with an air of confidence.*) Then I have one variegated red and white; 'tis a non-such in Spa.

LADY SEYMOUR.

I will certainly go and see it to-morrow.

FATHER ANTHONY *in going out.*

Farewell my Lady ; what a worthy action
you are going to do this evening !——

(He goes out.)

LADY SEYMOUR.

The Agleberts and the carnations make
extraordinary confusion in his brain. To
relieve the poor, and cultivate his flowers,
make the sum of his pleasures and his hap-
piness. The greatest virtues are always ac-
companied with the most simple desires. But
I must go and find Felicia.—Ha, what a
sweet pretty girl !——

SCENE IV.

LADY SEYMOUR, JENNET, GOTO,
MARY.

JENNET, *leading Goto to the bottom of the stage, where she stops and sits down. Mary her sister comes forward to look at Lady Seymour.*

MARY.

No, it is not she.

LADY SEYMOUR, *looking at her.*

She is charming.—Come hither my little dear; what are you looking for?

MARY *making a courtesy.*

It is that—I took you for a very good Lady, and who is likewise very amiable, and I find I am mistaken.

LADY SEYMOUR.

But perhaps I am good too, as well as your lady.

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MARY *shaking her head.*

Oh!—

LADY SEYMOUR.

You do not believe it?

MARY.

The Lady gave me a gown.

LADY SEYMOUR.

O, that is another affair.—Is that it you have now?

MARY.

Yes madam, and then I have a fine cap which I shall wear on Sunday. And my sister Jennet, and my sister Louisa have new gowns.

LADY SEYMOUR.

And all from the good Lady?

MARY.

Yes, indeed.

LADY SEYMOUR.

What is her name?

MARY.

I never saw her till this morning, and I have forgot her name, but she is a French lady, and lodges *at the Prince Eugene*.

LADY SEYMOUR.

O 'tis Felicia.—And are your sisters as pretty as you?

MARY.

There is Jennet below.

LADY SEYMOUR.

That young girl who sits knitting?

MARY.

Yes, that is she.

LADY SEYMOUR.

Who is that with her?

MARY.

It is Goto, our blind woman.

LADY SEYMOUR.

Who is your blind woman?

THE BLIND WOMAN.

MARY.

Marry our blind woman, as my mother calls her, whom we walk with, and lead about. As to me, I have only led her these three months, because I was too little, and still I am not allowed to lead her in the streets for fear of the crowd.—

LADY SEYMOUR.

She is surely one of your relations?

MARY.

Yes, a relation very possibly. I don't know, but my mother loves her as much as she loves us; for she sometimes calls her, her sixth child.

LADY SEYMOUR.

It is very right to take care of relations, especially when they are infirm.—What is your name?

MARY.

Mary, at your service.

LADY SEYMOUR.

Well Mary, come and see me to-morrow

morning, I live upon the terrace at the large white house, and bring your blind woman with you, I shall be very glad to be acquainted with her.

MARY.

O Goto is a very good girl.

LADY SEYMOUR.

Farewell Mary till to-morrow. (*She goes out.*)

S C E N E V.

MARY, JENNET, GOTO.

MARY.

Here is another good Lady.—I'll lay a wager she will have a gown made for Goto; she loves blind people, I see that.—I am very glad of it. I shall keep my pretty apron, but if it had not been for this, I would have given it to Goto.—Ah! there they come.—They want to know what the lady said to me.

B iij

THE BLIND WOMAN

JENNET.

Mary tell us who that fine lady is, that was talking with you ?

MARY.

Is she not a pretty lady ? She lives upon the terrace ; I shall go there to-morrow and lead Goto with me.

JENNET.

Not alone, there are too many streets.

MARY.

Yes to be sure, and in the streets too. The fine lady said I was tall enough to do that. She knows these things very well, perhaps.

GOTO.

Mary, you are not strong enough to support me.

MARY.

O, to be sure—but it is because you love Jennet better than me—that is not fair.

GOTO.

Alas ! my children, I love you equally ; you are all so charitable !

JENNET.

Well Mary, I will only lead Goto through the streets without entering the lady's house.—

MARY.

No, no, you shall come with us : don't be uneasy ; but going along the road, Goto shall likewise lean upon me. Let her promise me that, and I shall be satisfied.

GOTO.

Yes Mary, yes my girl.—Poor dears, God will bless you all.

MARY.

By the by, Goto, are you our relation ? The lady asked me, and I did not know what answer to make.

GOTO.

Alas ! I am nothing to you, and I owe you every thing.—But heaven will reward you.

MARY.

What is it then you owe us Goto ?—

Is it, that it is a trouble to us to take care of you! It is with such good will. O! I wish I was but big enough to dress, serve, and lead you, like my mother and Jennet.—

JENNET, *low to Mary.*

Hold your tongue, you vex her; I believe she is crying.—

MARY, *going to the other side of Goto taking her by the hand.*

Goto, my dear Goto, have I said any thing that gives you pain? Are you offended?

GOTO.

On the contrary my dear children, your good hearts make me forget all my sorrows.—

MARY.

O! We are very happy then.—But I hear my mother's voice, it is she and Louisa.

SCENE IV.

MARY, JENNET, GOTO, Mrs. AGLEBERT, LOUISA.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

There they are:—Jennet, we were looking for you ; come, it is time to go home.

JENNET.

O mother, allow us to work here half an hour longer.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Very well, I have no objection. Mary go and fetch my wheel, and bring some work for yourself at the same time. (*Mary goes out.*)

LOUISA.

And for me mother ?

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

You shall stay with Goto, in case she wants any thing ; you shall execute her commissions ;

You must accustom yourself to be of use as well as your sisters. Come let us sit down. *(She draws a form and sits down; she takes Goto by the hand and places her between herself and Jennet.)*

LOUISA, to Jennet.

Sister give me your place, I must be there to serve Goto.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Sit down on the ground by her.

LOUISA.

With all my heart. *(She places herself upon her knees at Goto's feet.)*

JENNET.

Mother there is your wheel. *(Mary gives her mother the wheel, who begins immediately to spin: Jennet knits; Mary sits upon a large stone in the corner near the form, by the side of her mother, and hems a handkerchief; and Louisa takes some violets out of the pocket of her apron to make a nosegay.)*

Mrs. AGLEBERT, after a short silence.

Mary, is your father come home?

MARY.

No mother.

JENNET.

Is he not gone to the capuchin convent ?

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Yes, to speak with Father Anthony.

MARY.

O, Father Anthony has fine carnations !

LOUISA *crying*.

Ah Goto, you have thrown down all my
violets by your turning, on the ground.

GOTO.

Forgive me my dear child.—I could
not see them.

LOUISA *still crying*.

My God, my violets.—

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

What is the matter little girl ?

LOUISA.

Marry, she has thrown down all my violets.

So she may gather them up, and that too:
(*She throws away the nosegay she had begun,
in a passion.*)

JENNET.

O fy, Louisa.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Louisa, come hither: (*Louisa rises, and
Mrs. Aglebert takes her between her knees.*)
Louisa are you angry with Goto.

LOUISA.

Yes, she has thrown down my violets.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

We shall talk of that by and by, but in
the first place, take my wheel and carry it
home.

LOUISA.

With all my heart mother.—O, it is
too heavy, I cannot even lift it.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Well Louisa, I will no longer love you,
since you cannot carry my wheel.

LOUISA, *crying.*

But mother, I have not strength; is it my fault?

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

So you think I am wrong to desire it?

LOUISA.

Yes mother you are wrong. And then you know very well that I am too little to carry that great ugly wheel.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

It is very true I know it; but don't you likewise know that Goto is blind? Can she see your flowers, and can she help you to gather them up?

LOUISA.

Well I was wrong to cry, and to be provoked with her.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Is she not sufficiently unhappy, poor girl, not to see; to be blind from her birth?

THE BLIND WOMAN

GOTO, taking Mrs. Aglebert by the hand.

Ah! Mrs. Aglebert, I am not unhappy ;
no, your goodness, your charity.——

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Don't speak of that, my dear girl.——Hear
me Louisa, if you do not look upon Goto as
your sister, I will no longer look upon you as
my child.

LOUISA.

I love Goto very well, but however, she is
not my sister.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

It pleased God to make this poor girl fall
quite helpless into my hands ; was it not to
say to me, there is a sixth child which I
give you ?

JENNET.

O yes, just the same thing.

MARY.

I likewise can conceive that.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

And Louisa too will be able to conceive it in time : goodness of heart must come with reason. My dear children there is no such thing as content, without a good heart ; I repeat it to you, and desire you will remember it. Your father and I have worked hard, and have had a great deal of trouble, but by always doing our duty, life passes smoothly ; and then one good action consoles us for ten years of toil and vexation.

MARY,

Mother, I think I hear some ladies coming.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Very well, let us be gone.

JENNET.

Mother, mother, it is the French Lady.

Mrs. AGLEBERT:

No matter, let us go home. Come, put back the bench: *(They all rise.)*

S C E N E VII.

MARY, JENNET, GOTO, LOUISA,
Mrs. AGLEBERT Lady SEYMOUR,
FELICIA.

Lady SEYMOUR.

Father Anthony is not yet come.—Ha !
there are the young girls, of whom we were
just now speaking.

FELICIA, *to Jennet.*

Is that your mother ?

Mrs. AGLEBERT, *making a courtesy.*

Yes madam—and I proposed to go to-
morrow to thank you madam, for your good-
ness to my children ; but I have been so
busy yesterday and to-day.—

FELICIA.

This blind girl is one of your family, no
doubt ?

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

No madam.

GOTO.

No, but it is the same thing.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Jennet, take my wheel.—Let us go, lest we disturb the ladies.—

LADY SEYMOUR.

I beg you will not go away.—I have something to say to you. (*low to Felicia.*) She seems to dread our questions about the blind woman. It is somewhat singular.

FELICIA, *low to Lady Seymour.*

I made the same remark. (*Aloud to Mrs. Aglebert.*) What is your situation in life, your business?

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

I spin and make linen.

LADY SEYMOUR.

And is your work sufficient to support your family.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Yes madam, we have wherewithal to live.

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THE BLIND WOMAN

FELICIA.

That day however when I met your daughters on Annette and Lubin's hill, I was equally struck with the poverty which was evident from their dress, and with their charming figures.—And you yourself don't seem to be in a more prosperous state.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

It is true we are not rich, but we are content.

LADY SEYMOUR, *to Felicia.*

Does not she interest you?

FELICIA.

Beyond expression.—(*To Mrs. Aglebert.*)
You have three charming little girls there—
(*All the three courtesy.*) Have you any more children?

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

I have two boys likewise, thank God.

GOTO.

And I, whom she entirely supports.—

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Ah Goto!—

LADY SEYMOUR.

How?—

GOTO.

It is to these worthy people I owe every thing. This family of Angels, lodge, feed, clothe and serve me, who am a poor infirm girl, frequently sick, and always useless. I find in them a father, mother, brothers, sisters and servants, for they are all equally disposed to do good offices, all equally good, equally charitable. Ah ladies, they are angels, real angels whom you see before you.

FELICIA.

What, is it possible!—O Heavens!

LADY SEYMOUR.

Surprise and compassion have struck me motionless.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

My God! what we have done, was so

natural !—This good girl had no other resource ; we could comfort and help her ; could it be possible to abandon her ?—

MARY, *low to Jennet.*

Why are these ladies so very uneasy at this ? See, they are in tears.

JENNET.

It is because they are surpris'd at it ; but however there is no reason.

FELICIA.

Be so good as to let us know the particulars of such an affecting story.

LADY SEYMOUR *to Mrs. Aglebert.*

How did this poor girl fall into your hands ?

GOTO.

We lodged in the same house, when an old aunt of mine, who took care of me, and upon whose labour I subsisted, happened to die, and with her, I lost every means of support. I fell sick, and this dear good woman came to see me ; she began by sitting

up with me, paying a doctor for me, making my drinks, in short, serving me as my nurse. When I recovered she took me home to her house, where I have been treated these two years as if I had been the eldest daughter of the family,

FELICIA embracing Mrs. Aglebert.

O incomparable woman, with such a soul, into what a condition has your destiny placed you.

LADY SEYMOUR.

Let me too embrace her.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Ladies, you make me ashamed——

LADY SEYMOUR to Mrs. Aglebert.

Tell us your name, that respectable name, which shall never be effaced from our remembrance.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

My name is Catharine Aglebert.

LADY SEYMOUR.

Aglebert!—It is she whom Father Anthony

mentioned to me.—Do you know Father Anthony?

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Yes madam, he came to our house this morning, and this evening has sent for my husband, but I don't know what he wants with him.

GOTO.

I saw him yesterday at the Capuchin Gardens; he asked me some questions, and I told him my whole story.

FELICIA.

But how comes it that your story is not known to all the people in Spa? How is it possible that such an instance of virtue and benevolence should remain unknown.

GOTO.

Because Mr. and Mrs. Aglebert have never mentioned it; besides, I am frequently sick, and of course confined to the house a part of the year, and Jennet, who takes care of me, leads me, by her mother's desire, to the walks

which are the least frequented; and when she observes people coming, she leads me a different way. It is only when she is greatly hurried with her work, that I am taken to the garden of the Capuchins, which is near at hand, and that has only happened three or four times

LADY SEYMOUR *to Felicia.*

Here is virtue in all its lustre, and we enjoy the inexpressible happiness of discovering and contemplating it in all its purity. Simple, sublime, natural; without vanity, without ostentation, and finding within itself, both its glory and its reward.

FELICIA.

Ah! who can see it in this light without paying their adorations? Who can look upon this woman without feeling a delightful emotion of respect and admiration!

LADY SEYMOUR.

And that conformity of disposition, that general agreement for the good of the whole family!—And that girl, the affecting and

virtuous object of so many kindneſſes, how ſhe expreſſes her gratitude, how ſhe is penetrated with whatever ſhe ought to feel!—— No, nothing is wanting to compleat the delightful picture.

MARY.

O mother, I think I ſee Father Anthony.—

LOUISA.

I am glad of it, for he always gives me a violet.

LADY SEYMOUR.

Stay Mrs. Aglebert, and we will go home with you preſently.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Madam,——



S C E N E VIII.

MARY, JENNET, GOTO, LOUISA,
Mrs. AGLEBERT, Lady SEYMOUR,
FELICIA, FATHER ANTHONY.

LADY SEYMOUR.

Come, Father Anthony, come, I fancy I
have discovered the treasure you spoke of to
me.——

FATHER ANTHONY.

Just so, there they are; it is Mrs. Agle-
bert. Well then my Lady, you know her
history?——

LADY SEYMOUR.

I know all.

FATHER ANTHONY, *to Mrs. Aglebert.*

Mrs. Aglebert, learn to know and thank
your benefactress. Lady Seymour wanted to
give fifty guineas to the most worthy family
in Spa, and her choice has fallen upon yours.

THE BLIND WOMAN

Goto raising her hands to Heaven.

O my God!——

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Fifty guineas!——No, madam, it is too much; there are a number of worthy people in Spa, still more needy than we. My neighbour Mrs. Savard is a worthy woman, and in such misery!——

LADY SEYMOUR.

Very well, I will take care of Mrs. Savard, I promise you.——Father Anthony shall give you fifty guineas this night, and I will add a hundred more, as a portion for Jennet.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

O my Lady, it is too much——it is too much indeed.——

GOTO.

O God! is it possible——O where is this good Lady, that I may embrace her knees.——Jennet where is she?——(*Jennet leads her to Lady Seymour's feet.*)

FELICIA.

Poor girl, how affecting to see her!—
And you my Lady, you must be happy!—

GOTO, *laying hold of Lady Seymour's robe.*

Is this she?—

LADY SEYMOUR, *reaching her hand to Goto.*

Yes my Girl!—

GOTO, *throwing herself at her feet.*

Ah madam, I will pray for you all the days of my life. You have made the fortune of this respectable family, but you have done still more for me. I owe to you their content, and the only happiness poor Goto can find upon earth, which is the knowledge of these worthy people being made as happy as they deserve. I have nothing more to wish, and now I can die satisfied.—

LADY SEYMOUR, *raising her up and embracing her.*

O, I conceive your happiness, and enjoy it with transport.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

We shall all join, madam, in our prayers to heaven for you, while we live.

JENNET.

O yes indeed.

MARY.

And with all our hearts.

LOUISA.

And I too.

LADY SEYMOUR.

Pray then that it may preserve to me a feeling heart ; you prove to me that it is the most precious gift heaven can bestow.

FATHER ANTHONY.

My lady, I just now came past Vauxhall, where they are playing and dancing, but I will wager, the pleasures of the people who are there, are not equal to those you have been just now tasting.

FELICIA.

How they are to be pitied, if the happiness we have been enjoying is unknown to them !——

LADY SEYMOUR.

Come, let us go home with Mrs Algebert,
I am impatient to see her husband.—

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Madam, you are very good, but we live so
high!—

LADY SEYMOUR.

Come and conduct us; with what pleasure
shall I enter that house, which contains
such virtuous inhabitants!

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

My God, Father Anthony, speak for us:
I am so surpris'd, so affected, I do not know
how to express himself.—

FATHER ANTHONY.

Come, come, my Lady's heart can see into
yours.—But Mrs. Algebert, there is one
favour you must obtain for me with my
Lady; it is to come and see my garden when
she leaves you.

THE BLIND WOMAN

LADY SEYMOUR.

That is but just, and I promise you I will.

FATHER ANTHONY.

My lady, you very well deserve the finest carnation in the whole town, and—you shall have it this night.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

If I durst offer my arm to the ladies.—

LADY SEYMOUR.

With all my heart, my dear Mrs. Aglebert.

Mrs. AGLEBERT.

Jennet and Mary, take care of Goto.

FELICIA.

Come, let us lose no time, let us go to see the man who is worthy of such a wife and such children. (*They go out with Father Anthony: Goto and the three little girls let them go on before.*)

GOTO.

May God bestow his richest blessings on that good lady!

MARY.

How amiable she is!

LOUISA.

How beautiful she is!

JENNET.

Is it possible, to be so good and not be beautiful—Now they are past—come let us follow them—O my father, how happy shall I be to witness his joy!

THE END.

O F S T A

MARY

How amiable the old

house

How beautiful the is!

Janet

It is possible to be so good and not be
beautiful—Now they are both—remember
to follow them—O my father, how happy
I shall be to witness this joy!

T H E E N D

T H E D O V E,

A

C O M E D Y.

In one Act.

Vol. II.

D

THE PERSONS.

ROSINA, }
AMELIA, } *Sisters.*

ZELIS, *a Friend of Rosina and Amelia.*

COLIN, *the Gardener.*

The Scene is in a House in the Country.



THE DOVE,
A COMEDY.

SCENE FIRST.

The stage represents a garden.

(The curtain rises; Amelia is seen near a tree, holding a dove in her bosom; Rosina holds a basket of flowers, and in reverie seems to look attentively at her sister; she is leaning against an orange tree; which Colin waters.

ROSINA, after a short silence.

SHE thinks of nothing but her dove!—

AMELIA.

Poor little dove, how it leans upon my
D ij

52 THE DOVE,

my bosom! How gentle and quiet it is!
How I love it. (*She kisses it.*)

ROSINA, *shrugging up her shoulders.*
How affecting!—

AMELIA.

Colin, have you put feed and water in the
dove cot?—

COLIN.

Yes miss.—

AMELIA.

Here, carry my dove there, but take care
you do not hurt it!—Softly then, you
will crush it—there, very well, gently,
so.—Wait Colin; let me take my leave
of it!—(*She kisses and caresses it again.*)
Charming little creature! Go, then Co-
lin,—(*Colin goes with the dove.*)

SCENE II.

ROSINA, AMELIA.

ROSINA,

Truly sister, I am very much surpris'd to see one of your age give up all her time to fondling a bird!—

AMELIA.

But I don't find fault with your passion for flowers; why do you laugh at me and my dove, Rosina?—

ROSINA.

There is a great difference! Flowers are nothing but a subject of amusement to me, but your melancholy turtle is an object of the most lively, tender affection to you.—

AMELIA.

Most lively!—tender!—what folly!—But after all, is not a gentle, sensible dove a more interesting subject than a roe?—

54 T H E D O V E ,

ROSINA.

For which reason I would sacrifice to you without reluctance, all my roses, orange-trees, white lilac, and even the charming myrtle which Zelis gave me; but you Amelia cannot resolve to give your dove to me.

AMELIA.

What do you intend by these reproaches? How long, Rosina, have you doubted my friendship? Has it ever deceived you?

ROSINA,

O! I know what.—

AMELIA.

For my part, I do not understand what you would be at.—

ROSINA.

Let us change the subject.—Zelis is expected to-day.

AMELIA.

After a six months absence, it will give me great pleasure to see her!—

ROSINA.

O I do not doubt it, for if I must tell you my thoughts, you have never loved any thing so much as Zelis.—

AMELIA. *smiling.*

Do you think so sister?—

ROSINA.

Yes, not even your dove.—

AMELIA.

I remember that formerly you was so unjust as to believe I preferred Zelis to you, but since she has been absent, you seemed to have got entirely the better of that prejudice.—When you assured me of it, did you deceive me sister?—

ROSINA.

I shall never deceive you Amelia—but I love you too well, not to be frequently uneasy, agitated, and out of sorts with myself.—You are my true and only friend, and I cannot bear that another should share with me in your confidence and affection.—

AMELIA.

You deserve both the one and the other, and you are my sister; so that if Zelis were mistress of all the good qualities which attach me to you, I should still love you better than her.——

ROSINA.

Because I am your sister! Ah, how cold that is!——

AMELIA.

But do you set no value upon the pleasing bands by which we are united, those sacred ties of blood which make it our duty to love one another?——

ROSINA.

So you only love me because it is a duty?——

AMELIA.

No, but that duty makes my affection more tender.

ROSINA.

O how differently we feel!——but somebody comes.——

A COMEDY.

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AMELIA.

Perhaps it is Zelis! ~~—~~

ROSINA.

Truly I think I hear her voice.

AMELIA, *runs to meet Zelis*

Ah! 'tis certainly she.

ROSINA.

What joy!—What transports!—What more could she do for me!—Well, I will constrain myself.

(*Amelia and Zelis return having hold of each other by the arm.*)

SCENE III.

ROSINA, AMELIA, ZELIS.

ZELIS.

Where is she?

AMELIA.

There she is. (*Rosina advances some steps, Zelis runs to her and embraces her.*)

58 THE DOVE,

ZELIS.

Rosina, Amelia, how happy I am to find myself again with you !——

ROSINA.

I assure you my heart shares in the pleasure.——

AMÉLIA and ROSINA.

We did not expect you till the evening.

ZELIS.

We came on without stopping.——My mother was so impatient to see yours, for she loves her as we love one another. While they are shut up together, let us chat at liberty : one has so many things to say after so long an absence !——

AMÉLIA.

You will give us an account of your travels first.

ZELIS.

That will be a subject for more than one conversation.

ROSINA.

How many leagues have you travelled ?

A COMEDY.

59

ZELIS.

I have marked them down in my journal.
Let me see, I will tell you; stop——From
hence to Paris is forty leagues. Forty leagues
to go, and forty leagues to return, make
fourscore leagues.

ROSINA and AMELIA *together*.

You have travelled fourscore leagues?

ZELIS.

Just so much——

ROSINA.

That is prodigious!——

AMELIA.

Fourscore leagues in six months? you
must be very much fatigued?

ZELIS.

No, not very much.

ROSINA.

Well then, let us talk a little of Paris.
How did you like Paris?——

ZELIS.

O, I found it ~~very noisy~~—a perpetual bustle!

AMELIA.

You have seen the Tuilleries, the opera?—

ZELIS.

Yes, but I don't like the opera, it is so warm; and then one is shut up as if in a prison. There are none but the young ladies who sing and dance that have good places.

ROSINA.

And the Tuilleries—They say it is a very fine walk.

ZELIS.

No, not very fine. There are great walks quite straight; and a large round basin of dirty water!—And then not a single flower. Only conceive, I looked a whole day for a violet, without being able to find a single stalk.—

A COMEDY. 61

ROSINA.

I like our willow walk upon the bank of
the river better.

ZELIS.

And I too, I assure you.

AMELIA.

Only see how travellers tell lies, with all
their fine descriptions of the Tuilleries!—

ZELIS.

For my part, I tell you true, you may de-
pend upon it, the place where we now are,
is worth a thousand of Paris. Here the air
is so pure, so perfumed—the country so
flowery, so smiling!—I was quite melan-
choly at Paris; nothing but walls, and houses,
no verdure, even in June; ah, if you knew
how that grieves the heart!—

ROSINA.

I can easily conceive it.

AMELIA.

You will be very glad then to revisit all our
old walks?

62 T H E D O V E ,

ZELIS.

O, tomorrow I shall get up by daybreak—
but where shall we go first.

ROSINA.

We will go to the meadow.

ZELIS.

O, the meadow!—I shall jump there
with all my heart—Ah, I forgot to tell
you—It is forbidden to jump in the Tuil-
leries.——

AMELIA and ROSINA.

Indeed!——

ZELIS.

Yes truly forbidden——You must walk
there at a very slow pace, just so.——(*She
walks with a ridiculous gravity.*)

ROSINA.

Ah, good heaven, what a country! I hope
I shall never go there——

ZELIS.

O, you will find many more extraordinary

things, when I come to read my journal to you——You will there find the particulars of all my sufferings.

AMELIA.

Ah, my God!

ZELIS.

And that from the very next day after my arrival at Paris.——

ROSINA.

How so?

ZELIS.

The first day I had two teeth drawn, the next, I had two thousand papers put in my hair; the third, I had a pair of stays tried which smothered me; and the eighth——Ah, that was a day of punishment indeed——

AMELIA.

Really, you alarm me!

ZELIS.

The eighth, they took me to a ball,

ROSINA.

Is that all; I had formed to myself a very delightful idea of a ball.——

64 THE DOVE,

ZELIS.

Good heaven, what a mistake you have been in——The preparation alone is sufficient to disgust one for life——If you knew what it is to dress for a ball, it is the most painful, and at the same time, one of the most comical things in the world.

ROSINA.

Well, tell us all about it.——

ZELIS.

For my part, I was charmed at the thoughts of going to a ball.——Alas! I did not know what it was. I had heard talk of dances and collations, I did not ask for any thing better, and expected the day of the ball with impatience; it came at last, and I was told that I was to be dressed in the habit of a shepherdess.

AMELIA.

A shepherdess? the dress at least was well chosen; it must be convenient for dancing.

ZELIS.

Yes, convenient truly! They have a very droll idea of shepherdesses at Paris, as you

first of all they began by fixing an enormous cushion on my head.—

ROSINA.

A cushion?—

ZELIS.

Yes, they call it a *tocque*.—They fix this *tocque* with great pins as long as my arm; and then put upon it, Lord knows how much false hair.—

AMELIA.

False hair, and you have such beautiful hair of your own?—

ZELIS.

No matter for that, there must be false hair; they are so fond of art, that they employ it even when it is good for nothing, and frequently when it disfigures; in this manner, with their confounded *Herison* * they made me a monstrous head.—Over all was placed a great hat, and above the hat, there were gauze and ribbons, and above the rib-

* *Herison* is a Hedge-hog.

66 THE DOVE,

bons, a bushel of flowers, and above the flowers half a dozen feathers, the shortest of them at least two feet high —

ROSINA.

But have done, my dear Zelis, you exaggerate; how was it possible you had strength to carry all this? —

ZELIS.

Ye in this manner was I loaded; I could neither move nor turn my head, for the least motion made me lose the ballance, and almost overfet me. — Afterwards they dressed me, they put on my new stays, which squeezed me so I could not draw my breath; they next put on a *confideration*. —

AMELIA.

A *confideration*, what is that?

ZELIS.

It is a kind of hoop filled with hair, made with iron and excessively heavy; I was then dressed in a robe covered with garlands, and in this condition was I led to the ball, when I was told: *Take care not to rub off your*

rouge nor spoil your head-dress, or tumble your cloaths, and enjoy the pleasures of the place.

ROSINA.

Ah, poor wretched creature.——And could you dance?

ZELIS.

Alas! I could scarce walk.——

AMELIA.

You was let loose however at the ball.

ZELIS.

O, you are not there yet. I was seated on a bench, and ordered to wait there till some one should come and ask me to dance. I waited a long time, and looked so wretched and unhappy, that nobody could think I had the least desire to dance. I was asked however at last; but the place was taken, and I was obliged to return to my bench.

ROSINA.

How is that; the place was taken?

ZELIS.

Yes truly; at these balls, the ladies who run the best, dance the most; they go to keep their places.—

AMELIA.

What, is there not places for every one.—

ROSINA.

Besides, it is very unpolite to prevent other people from dancing.

ZELIS.

I met with some young ladies at the ball, who were much worse than unpolite, for they were cruel; they laughed at my suffering perplexed look; they stared at me from head to foot, in a manner—a very rude manner I assure you; and then they laughed among themselves, as if they would have split their sides.

AMELIA.

O fy. What you have told us, I should not in the least have suspected.

A COMEDY.

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ZELIS.

I was undoubtedly ridiculous, but as I appeared timid and awkward, ought they not rather to have pitied and excused me?

ROSINA.

Well, let them come here with their toques, their considerations, their perriwigs and their rouge; I shall laugh at them in their turn, and ask them to run a race; we shall see if they can catch me, or if they can jump a ditch better than I.

AMELIA.

No sister, let us never imitate what we disapprove; to be the object of mockery is but a small misfortune, but it is a great one, to yield to such a dangerous inclination, since it would prove that we can be unjust and cruel.

ROSINA.

But it is truly tragic, where to play the first part, one must be the person oppressed.

AMELIA,

Yes, but the oppressed in that case, are

70 T H E D O V E ,

sure of the favour of all good hearts ; do you reckon that nothing ?

ROSINA.

O no, for I would rather have the approbation of Amelia, than the applause of all these wicked little misses who laughed at the distressful situation and awkward manner of Zelis. But com, finish the story of your ball ; did you dance at last ?

ZELIS.

My God no, the place was always taken, and I was very soon entirely abandoned by all the dancers.

ROSINA.

Poor girl ! how you was to be pitied !— And was the ball room a fine place ?

ZELIS.

By no means ; and it was so intolerably hot, that though I sat motionless upon my bench, I was as warm as if I had been dancing.

AMELIA.

And this is what is called great pleasure, en-

tertainment!—What a difference between that and our country balls upon the great Downs, where we are not smothered, where we dance as much as we please, and are so chearful!—

ZELIS.

O I am overjoyed to find myself here again!—But let us talk of our schemes for to-morrow; I shall be very desirous to go to the farm, there is such excellent milk there. —By the by, how does my good mother Nicole do, is she not grown old?—

AMELIA.

No, still the same, always good humoured.

ZELIS.

And the white lamb she promised me?

AMELIA.

Alas! Zelis it is dead.

ZELIS.

Ah my God!—Well, I had such a foreboding when I went away, don't you remember?

E iij

72 T H E D O V E ,

ROSINA.

Yes I remember.—But Nicole is rearing another for you.—

ZELIS.

Rosina, have you plenty of flowers this year?

ROSINA.

The myrtle which you gave me is more beautiful than ever; it was struck with a North wind, and I was very apprehensive about it for two days; but thanks to the industry of Colin, it is perfectly recovered.

ZELIS.

Ah Colin! I shall be glad to see him.

AMELIA.

You will find him greatly grown.

ZELIS to Amelia.

And the dovecote?

AMELIA.

Ah Zelis, for these three months I have had a charming dove that makes me neglect all my other birds; it understands me, knows me, comes to me;—and it is so pretty.—

ZELIS.

White, I'll engage!——

AMELIA.

Yes,——

ZELIS.

With a black ring round its neck?——

AMELIA.

Just so.

ZELIS.

O, I die with impatience to see it.

AMELIA.

I will carry you to it now.

ZELIS.

And it is fond of you?

AMELIA.

Most surprisngly.

ZELIS.

Take good care that you do not lose it.

AMELIA.

I have not courage to cut its wings, and
for that reason am apprehensive,

74 T H E M D O V E,

ROSINA, *aside*.

A very interesting conversation truly.

ZELIS.

Do you take it, when you go to walk?—

AMELIA.

I am absent from it as little as possible.

ROSINA.

Would not any one think she is talking of a friend? I can hold no longer. (*She moves some steps to go out.*)

AMELIA.

Where are you going Rosina?—

ROSINA.

I am going for some flowers to give to Zelis.

AMELIA.

You will join us again at the dovecote, I shall go there with Zelis.

ROSINA.

Very well. (*Aside.*) I shall be there before them. (*She goes out running.*)

S C E N E IV.

ZELIS, AMELIA.

ZELIS looking at Rosina as she goes out.

In what haste she leaves us!—What is she about?

AMELIA.

I cannot say.—You know Zelis, that Rosina frequently has whims that cannot be accounted for : she is good and tender hearted, but she distracts and disturbs herself almost always without reason.

ZELIS.

Yes, she has some singular ideas. She torments herself : for instance, she loves you greatly, but it is not a right kind of love, for she does not place an entire confidence in you ; a mere nothing disturbs and alarms her ; I believe it is what is called jealousy.

AMELIA.

But I have told Rosina that she was the

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dearest to me of all my friends. If she questions my sincerity, how can she still love me? If she believes me, how can she be jealous?—In either case, I cannot understand her jealousy.

ZELIS.

Because you are reasonable, and in this respect Rosina is not.

AMELIA.

What can be done to cure her of this strange humour?—

ZELIS.

I do not know, I am afraid it will be very difficult.

AMELIA.

Let us go and find her.—But what does Colin want?—He looks as if he was scared.—



SCENE V.

ZELIS, AMELIA, COLIN.

AMELIA.

What do you want Colin?

COLIN.

Ah miss!

AMELIA.

What is the matter?

ZELIS.

Say—What has happened?

COLIN.

A sad misfortune!—

AMELIA.

Ah Heaven! my dove.—

COLIN.

It is lost.

AMELIA.

Ah, my God!—

COLIN.

I found the dovecote open and the dove gone.

ZELIS.

Leave us Colin.—(*Colin goes out.*) My dear Amelia, I protest to you I am a thousand times more grieved at the loss of your dove, than for my white lamb.

AMELIA.

Ah, my poor little dove!—O, if you had but seen it.

ZELIS.

Perhaps it may be recovered.

AMELIA.

I cannot flatter myself with that hope.—
Ah, if I had cut its wings!

ZELIS.

Alas, I thought of that!—but I durst not mention it.

SCENE VI.

ZELIS, AMELIA, COLIN, ROSINA,

holding a shut basket.

ROSINA *steps at the bottom of the stage and says.*

They are dismayed.

AMELIA.

Don't I hear my sister?

ZELIS.

Yes, it is she.

AMELIA.

Ah Rosina, my dove!

ROSINA.

I know your misfortune, and I see it is greater than I imagined, for you seem quite oppressed.

AMELIA.

What an ironical manner?—Indeed sister?—when you was uneasy about your myrtle, I did not laugh at you.

80 THE DOVE,

ROSINA *aside.*

That reproach strikes me—I deserve it?
(*She seems to think.*)

ZELIS.

You are unjust Amelia; Rosina loves you,
and therefore must share in all your griefs;
have not I been weeping for the loss of your
dove, and can the friendship of Rosina be
less tender?

AMELIA.

Dear Rosina, have I afflicted you? I pray
you forgive me.

ROSINA, *aside.*

My perplexity increases!—ah!! what
have I done?—

AMELIA.

Come and embrace me my dear sister—
but, say, what is the matter with you?

ROSINA *embracing her.*

Amelia.—

AMELIA.

Well?

ROSINA, *in confusion.*

If you recover your dove, will you be satisfied?—

AMELIA.

What, do you know any thing of it?

ROSINA *still confused.*

No, it is a simple question.

ZELIS.

That question surprises me——Rosina, you look down, you are struck dumb.——Ah! the dove is not lost, you know where it is.—

AMELIA.

What do you say Zelis? Can you imagine my sister capable of wishing to afflict me, to make a sport of my distress, and to dissemble with me? No, Rosina has a feeling heart; she is sometimes unreasonable, but she is as candid as she is feeling; I know her heart and I cannot suspect her.—

ZELIS,

Let her justify herself then!—— but see
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how she blushes !—O what a guilty look—

AMELIA.

Sister what is the meaning of this confused look ? can it be possible ?—

ROSINA.

O my dear Amelia ! (*she weeps.*)

AMELIA.

Rosina—what is become of my dove ? do not conceal it from me.

ZELIS.

Rosina, has stolen it, that is plain.

AMELIA.

Sister, you are silent.

ZELIS.

I will answer for her—The history of the dove is written on her forehead. Rosina was jealous of the dove ; she has stolen and shut up her rival.

AMELIA.

Rosina !

ROSINA.

Ah Sister! what shall I say to you! Zelis has guessed it—Yes, I have your dove. I intended however to restore it to you—but I will not attempt to excuse myself. I see my whole fault; I have given you uneasiness, I have deceived you, I am ungrateful and foolish; in short, I do not deserve the friendship of Amelia. You will no longer love any one but Zelis, I must expect it—I shall die at the thoughts of it, that is certain—Ah Sister, at least grant me your pity.

AMELIA;

Thou dear unjust friend!

ROSINA.

What! you still love me?

ZELIS *laughing*.

Yes next to me, you shall be Amelia's dearest friend.

ROSINA,

Ah Zelis; What cruel and bitter pleasantry!

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84 THE DOVE,

ZELIS.

On this subject I believe you will think none agreeable.

AMELIA.

Do not torment her any more; but I cannot recover from my surprize—you jealous Rosina, and of what? of a bird?

ZELIS.

She was jealous of me when we were together, and in my absence, it was thrown upon the poor dove. She would have been jealous of good Mother Nicole, or indeed of any thing; for I observe that the jealous, to give themselves up to their whims, have no need of pretences or reasonable causes.

ROSINA.

Alas! she is right.—

AMELIA.

What Rosina, could you think I loved my dove better than you?

A COMEDY. 85

ROSINA.

O no—but it engaged all your attention, you talked of it incessantly.—

AMELIA.

You are inconceivable; if I suffer, you suffer with me; when my hand was wounded yesterday with the thorn, you shed tears; why then cannot you likewise partake in my pleasures?

ROSINA.

These ridiculous whims are corrected for life, at least I hope so. Your mildness, your reason, but more particularly your friendship, have at last shewn me the excess of my folly—Come sister, come and find your dove, it is near at hand, in the little thicket of roses.

AMELIA.

I shall not take it again, I give it to you Rosina, keep it, and may the hand that bestows it, make it more dear to you.

ROSINA.

Ah sister—how I shall love it from henceforth.

86 T H E D O V E ,

ZELIS.

Yes, but take care that Amélia in her turn does not become jealous——

ROSINA.

Ah, I wish to heaven?

ZELIS.

See how she corrects herself!—She has been just now praising your reason, but in the bottom of her heart, she wishes to see you partake in her folly.——

AMELIA.

No, no, Rosina has too good an understanding, not to be sensible, that she, whose delicacy goes the length of distrust, is a torment to herself, and offers a mortal injury to the object that is the occasion of it. Think of it my dear Rosina, and repeat to yourself every day, that friendship cannot exist without esteem and confidence.

T H E E N D.

C E C I L I A;
OR THE
SACRIFICE OF FRIENDSHIP,

A
C O M E D Y.

In one Act.

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THE PERSONS.

CECILIA, *a young Novice.*

CALISTA, *another young Novice her Friend.*

THE ABBESS.

Mother WINNIFRED, *Treasurer.*

Sister ANGELICA, *attendant on the turning
box.*

Sister ROSALIA, *a young Nun.*

Miss St. FIRMIN, *Cecilia's eldest sister.*

The Scene is in a Country Convent.



C E C I L I A ;
OR THE
SACRIFICE OF FRIENDSHIP,
A C O M E D Y.

SCENE FIRST.

The ABBESS, MOTHER WINNIFRED,

ABBESS.

YES mother, I have placed all my confidence in you, and it is only with you that I can speak freely.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

My attachment is well known to you madam, it is of long standing.—

A B E S S.

Mother Winnifred, I want to talk with you a little; I am told the two young people who are to take the vows to-morrow, are sick; that would delay the ceremony; positively, I will not allow it.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

You are very right madam; the eve of such a day, it ought not to be suffered.—

A B E S S.

These are a sort of things that do not admit of delays.—I have seen so many recant at the very instant.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

The novitiate should be shortened; a year, is too long; a great many ideas pass through a young head in the course of a year. (*She laughs.*) ha, ha, ha.—

A B E S S.

Ah, mother Winnifred, you still have charming spirits.—But I am of your opinion,

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that if the novitiate was only six months, we should have many more nuns.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

How comes it that government neglects it——what are they employed about?

ABBESS.

Leave that to me, I will present a memorial upon the subject.——

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

If you carry your point, it will be a great saving for us, and a good deal of money beside.

ABBESS.

How?

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

And all the sweet meats, chocolate, coffee, and tea, which is given to the Novice—— Every nun has had her share for a year—— in this case she would have it but six months; no bad change. (*She laughs again.*) ha, ha, ha, ha.——

ABBESS.

Mother Winnifred, you are very foolish.—
(*She laughs in coughing.*) There is nobody
but you makes me laugh.—But, let us talk
of these young girls; what is the matter with
them?

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

Cecilia seems to have been crying all night,
her eyes are swelled like my fist, but she does
not complain, she is content to be silent; as
to Calista, she is not quite so melancholy,
but you know she is naturally giddy, lively,
and trifling; she says she has a fever.

ABBESS.

It will be nothing, no, nothing at all; we
know these things.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

Yes, yes, we have gone through it.—
(*She laughs.*) Ha, ha, ha.—

ABBESS.

It is ten years since I have been reconciled.—

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

And I, more than twelve.

ABBESS.

How old are you?

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

Sixty madam.——

ABBESS.

We grow accustomed to every thing, tho' the beginnings prove harsh.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

We cannot be reconciled all at once.

ABBESS.

Well mother, I must speak with the novices; we must set them to rights again; they are girls of fashion, Cecilia especially is of a distinguished family in this country, and that gives an air of importance to a convent.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

She is a little girl whom I take to be very giddy and inconsistent.——

ABBESS.

Her behaviour is so gentle and so prudent!—

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

However, I cannot help suspecting her vocation; don't you remember the aversion she always testified to a convent in her infancy.

ABBESS.

Yes indeed, she used to take a pleasure in repeating that she never would be a nun.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

Then suddenly to come back to us at the age of seventeen, and to take the veil in spite of the intreaties of her family and the tears of her sister.—This cannot be natural.—These sighs which escape her, that settled melancholy—in short, from the beginning of her novitiate to this hour, I have never been able to make her laugh but from the teeth outward.

ABBESS.

You are certainly right, there is surely something concealed under this: but go and find her, I positively must speak with her.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

I will tell her madam.

ABBESS.

But hear me : take fix pounds of coffee, and two loaves of sugar which you will find in my closet, divide them, and let them be carried——

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

O I understand ; into the cells of Cecilia and Calista.——Come, come, for the last day we must not be pitiful, I shall add a couple of cakes of chocolate.——That puts me in mind of the old proverb.——

ABBESS.

What proverb ?

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

Of flies that are catched with honey. (*She laughs.*) ha, ha, ha, ha!——

ABBESS.

Truly you have such life and spirits, you seem as if you were but twenty.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

I run to obey your orders. (*She goes out.*)

ABBESS, *alone.*

What it is to be an Abbess, how many things she must have in her head.—I cannot conceive how I am capable of going through the fatigues of it.—But rank has its advantages.—Somebody comes.—It is Cecilia.

S C E N E II.

ABBESS, CECILIA.

ABBESS.

Come dear sister, come, I have not seen you to day, and I was just now lamenting it to the treasurer,

CECILIA.

You are very good madam.

ABBESS.

Have you breakfasted my dear?

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CECILIA.

No madam, I cannot eat.

ABBESS.

I know my girl that you complained of being cold in your cell, and I have given orders to have a stove carried into it, you shall have it to-morrow.

CECILIA.

I thank you madam.

ABBESS.

What a charming day will to-morrow be my dear.

CECILIA.

Alas!

ABBESS.

How I love that sigh—it ingenuously paints the tender pleasing joy with which you must be transported.

CECILIA.

Ah! madam.—

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Give vent to your tears my dear sister without constraint, you should yield to your feelings, you cannot shew yourself too much affected at the thoughts of the happiness that awaits you.

C E C I L I A.

I may cease then to constrain myself?—

A B B E S S.

Surely my girl—your tears might be a ground for scandal to the weak and wicked, because they must mistake the cause for which they flow; therefore they should be concealed from the world, but with us my girl, with your sisters, you have not the ridiculous interpretation to apprehend. We have all experienced these emotions, these sweet and holy transports with which you are agitated; we know what it is.

C E C I L I A.

Yes madam, indeed—I believe you see into my heart.—I have no art, I can but badly disguise what passes there.

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ABBESS.

I promise you my child, you have the best and most positive vocation I ever saw.—But what does sister Angelica want with us?—

SCENE III.

CECILIA, ABBESS, *Sister* ANGELICA,

SISTER ANGELICA.

Here is a letter just now delivered at the turning box, it is for sister Cecilia.

ABBESS.

Give it me——(*To Cecilia.*) My girl you know the custom of my house; during the novitiate I must——

CECILIA.

Read it, madam.

ABBESS.

Sister Angelica, withdraw.

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SISTER ANGELICA.

You are to give a breakfast this morning madam, and the treasurer tells me I have your leave to be present.

ABBESS.

Yes sister, give orders that all may be got ready in half an hour, and acquaint our mothers and sisters. (*Sister Angelica goes out.*)

CECILIA.

Give me leave to look at the writing of that letter.—

ABBESS.

See there my child.

CECILIA.

Ah, my God! it is my sister's hand: do madam read it.—

ABBESS *putting on her spectacles, opens the letter and reads aloud.*

“ This letter my dear sister is only to inform you of my arrival. I have finished the business which detained me at Paris,

“except my marriage, which I could not
 “think of concluding until I should see you.
 “I would have been with you before now, if
 “it had not been for some very extraordinary
 “events which delayed me. I shall have
 “the happiness of embracing you next
 “Thursday.”——

CECILIA.

Thursday!——that is to-day.——

ABBESS.

Yes indeed.——But let us read on. (*She reads.*) “It will be the eve of that terrible
 “day which is to engage you for ever ——
 “O sister, notwithstanding the sincerity of
 “your vocation, and all that you have said
 “to me upon the subject, I cannot think of
 “it without shuddering.——(*The Abbess stop-*
 “*ping*) A very worldly style indeed.

CECILIA.

I pray you madam, go on.——

ABBESS, *looking at the letter.*

Eh! without shuddering——“What so-
 “ciety for my dearest Cecilia is that of a
 “parcel of bigotted old maids!——(*The*
Abbess stops.)

C E C I L I A.

Will you give me leave to finish it madam?—Perhaps you are tired?—

A B B E S S.

It seems that your sister has not the purest principles.

C E C I L I A.

Her opinion of Convents, I own, is but indifferent.—But once more madam, if you please come to the conclusion of my letter.—

A B B E S S reads to herself.

Well—I have read it—and truly I cannot give it you; for really it is only fit to be thrown in the fire.—But hear me my dear sister, you are to take the vows to-morrow, this day must be dedicated entirely to meditation and recollection, for which reason, I tell you before hand, that you shall not see your sister; we will have her accommodated out of the Convent, I shall have the honour of making your apologies, and

the day after to-morrow you can renew them yourself.

CECILIA.

Give me leave madam to represent to you.—

ABBESS.

No, answer my girl, when I have said it is to be so, you must obey.

CECILIA.

I have but one word to say madam, if you will please to hear it. For these two years I have been determined to take the vows, and my sister has in vain combated this resolution; you must think that what she has not been able to obtain in two years, will not be granted in an instant. She is dear to me beyond all expression; she is my only friend, I must see her the instant she arrives, or to-morrow I will go to some other Convent in hopes of finding more confidence, indulgence and sensibility. I may to-morrow madam, if you accept this proposal, submit to your plea.

G iij

sure, but this day at least, I will only obey and yield to reason.

ABBESS.

O my God, my dear child don't be so violent, you love your sister, you say you will be grieved if you do not see her, that is enough.—I consent.—Come to my arms, my dear girl.—(*She embraces her.*) Somebody comes, O, it is our dear sisters to breakfast.

SCENE IV.

CECILIA, ABBESS, CALISTA, Mother
WINNIFRED, Sister ANGELICA, Sister
ROSALIA.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

Breakfast is ready, and we are all well disposed to do it honour; we have not devout stomachs for nothing. (*She laughs.*) ha, ha, ha.

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ABBESS.

Devout stomachs. (*She laughs.*) Ha, ha, ha.—(*All the nuns laugh except the two novices.*)

SISTER ANGELICA.

Mother Winnifred has always something to say that makes us laugh.

SISTER ROSALIA.

She is always the same.

CALISTA, *low to Cecilia.*

Let us laugh too.

CECILIA, *low to Calista.*

This has quite a contrary effect upon me.

ABBESS.

Sister Calista, you look wonderfully well to day; your countenance bespeaks perfect health.

CALISTA.

If it does, my countenance is very deceitful, for I have been very ill this night; I believe it is owing to our cells being so cold.

ABBESS.

Don't be uneasy my girl, you shall have a small stove to-morrow ; but in the mean time sister Rosalia, order one of my foot-stoves to be given her.

CALISTA *aside*.

The foot stove is the surest.—

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

Sister Rosalia, add a little bottle of hippocras *, which warms still better, especially at returning from matins.—(*She laughs.*) ha, ha, ha.

ABBESS.

At returning from matins—ha, ha, that is very good (*She laughs, and all the nuns laugh except the two novices.*) Who will say there is no mirth in convents.

CALISTA.

Not I, for I maintain we can laugh there without cause.

* Hippocras, is a small made wine.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

You will find it quite another thing in three months——when you shall really be one of us——(*She and all the nuns laugh.*) We never grow old, it is a privilege we have. (*She laughs excessively, as does the Abbess and the nuns, and continue it long and loud.*)

CALISTA *low to Cecilia.*

Could you conceive such excessive stupidity?

CECILIA *low to Calista.*

I am quite provoked.

ABBESS.

She has such strange out of the way ideas.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

That come like March in Lent * (*The laugh begins again louder than before, holding their sides, and laughing immoderately for a considerable time.*)

* That come like March in Lent. *A French saying, which signifies, it comes very conveniently; or, it never fails.*

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CECILIA *low to Calista.*

Could you believe this, if you did not see it?

CALISTA.

It begins to divert me.

ABBESS.

I have laughed truly till the tears come.—
I cannot bear it any more.—

SISTER ANGELICA,

I had almost lost my breath.

SISTER ROSALIA.

And I too——March in Lent!——

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

And the breakfast?

ABBESS.

Come, come Sisters. (*She gives a friendly stroke on the shoulder of Mother Winnifred, saying: What a foolish woman thou art!—Mother Winnifred gives her arm, and drawing near whispers something softly in her ear, then she laughs and the Abbess laughs. They go out laughing.*)

SISTER ANGELICA.

What was it she said?—

SISTER ROSALIA.

I did not hear it, but certainly it was something very droll.—*(They follow the Abbess and Mother Winnifred laughing.)*

SCENE V.

CALISTA, CECILIA.

CALISTA.

Cecilia shall we follow them?

CECILIA.

You are your own mistress; for my part, I shall remain where I am.

CALISTA.

We shall lose all Mother Winnifred's strokes of wit.

CECILIA.

Don't be uneasy, we shall be told them.

CALISTA.

I wonder how you could preserve your

gravity at *March in Lent*.—For my part I own I laughed at it; that excessive folly is really comical.

CECILIA.

I am confounded with it, it happens so frequently.—

CALISTA.

I don't believe there is such another Convent as this in the world.

CECILIA.

Unluckily there are many *, ignorance and want of employment necessarily bring about what we see here. However there are some

* It must be observed that the two novices are in a country convent, and what is said here, is only spoken of the generality. Every criticism that does not admit of exceptions must be unjust. Even in the country, there are convents to be found, free from the ridiculous absurdities represented in this little piece; that of Offigny, for instance, in Piccardy, is perfectly well regulated, and there all the virtues which can do honour to, or render the life of a nun respectable, are to be found united, without any alloy of meanness and affectation.

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truly valuable nuns; but they keep themselves shut up in their cells, and are not to be seen: the most part of the rest are narrow-minded, intermeddling, busy bodies. There is no medium; a nun must either have all these faults, or be a saint.

CALISTA.

And these are the people to whom the education of youth is entrusted!——

CECILIA.

Depend upon it, my dear Calista, that an affectionate mother, with a possibility of educating her daughter herself, will never put her in a convent.——But who is this coming to interrupt us?——



S C E N E VI.

CECILIA, CALISTA, Sister ROSALIA.

SISTER ROSALIA.

Sisters, the Lady Abbess sent me to ask why you do not come.—

CALISTA.

We are not hungry, we do not want any breakfast.

SISTER ROSALIA.

If it was but to hear Mother Winnifred, I assure you she never was so diverting; Madam says so.

CECILIA.

I do not doubt it, but sister, we will come and join you when breakfast is over.

SISTER ROSALIA.

Mother Winnifred has sung a little song, which was charming, for Madam said so; she will sing again if you choose it.—

CALISTA.

No, Sister, we have no desire for music.—

SISTER ROSALIA.

I am sure she would make you laugh; Madam said so.—

CECILIA.

Thank her, Sister, for her civilities; and tell her, that if she pleases, we have no inclination at present to profit by them.—

(Sister Rosalia goes out.)

CALISTA.

How obliging they are to novices!—

CECILIA.

How artful all that!—

CALISTA.

Ah, my dear Cecilia, I must absolutely take the advantage of the present opportunity of our being alone, to open my heart to you.

CECILIA.

What have you to say?

CALISTA.

You know the affection with which you have inspired me—you are the only person in this place whom I love.—

CECILIA.

Well, my dear Calista?—

CALISTA.

You have some secret sorrows, and you conceal them from me!

CECILIA.

No, Calista, you are mistaken.—

CALISTA.

Ah! every thing discovers you, in spite of yourself; I do not pry into what you do, but the eyes of friendship are clear-sighted!—
Ah, Cecilia, I saw how your tears flowed this morning!—

CECILIA.

It is true, I do not deny it; in renouncing the world I break the dearest ties—I have a Sister, and such a Sister!—

CALISTA.

Yes, I know.—

CECILIA.

I love her only. An orphan almost in my cradle, the first and sole object to which I could attach myself, was my Sister; all the affection of which my heart is capable, is united in her, and that heart has great sensibility.—She is a little older than I; her reason, sooner ripened than mine, instructed my infancy, and formed my temper and understanding: I found every thing in her; counsel, example, consolation, and affection; I have been used to look upon her as an enlightened guide, and at the same time as a most tender sister, and an indulgent friend. I am positive she would not hesitate an instant to make any sacrifice for my happiness; and for her, I would with pleasure give up my life.

CALISTA.

Is she not on the eve of being married?

CECILIA.

Yes, she is.—

CALISTA.

Does she marry the person to whom she was destined in her infancy?

CECILIA.

Yes; some interested motives occasioned the marriage to be deferred, but now it is resumed.

CALISTA.

It is a match of choice?

CECILIA.

It was at first a match of convenience; and in time my Sister became attached to a man of great merit, whom her relations pointed out to her as the man who was one day to be her husband. The father of the young man died, which occasioned a great change; his mother was an ambitious woman, and having formed new schemes, retracted her consent. The young man, in the greatest distress, had the virtue to obey, but at the same time the courage to declare, that he never would marry: But at last he is to meet with the reward of his love and constancy.

CALISTA.

But, my dear Cecilia, how could you resist the intreaties of Miss St. Firmin, and resolve to part from her for ever? Your fortune is genteel; that Uncle who loved you so much, before he set out for the Indies, settled a fortune upon you equal to your Sister's; you may live happily in the world. Surely some fatal, secret cause, makes you renounce it?

CECILIA.

If I was not born for the kind of life I am now going to embrace, and if my desires did not invite me to it, you may be assured, my dear Calista, that by carrying a pure and tranquil mind into solitude, it may be endured, at first without despair, and very soon without pain. I neither regret the world, nor its vain pleasures, which may dazzle for a moment, but never can yield satisfaction; I only regret my Sister; but if she is happy, I shall be content.

CALISTA.

To forget one's self, to dedicate all the attention to one beloved object, is to love indeed!—I cannot obtain your entire confi-

dence; but every thing I see and can conceive, helps to redouble and strengthen that friendship which attaches me to you.

CECILIA.

Somebody comes; let us be silent, my dear Calista.

SCENE VII.

CECILIA, CALISTA, MOTHER
WINNIFRED.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

JOY, joy to you! I come to acquaint you of the arrival of Miss St Firmin!

CECILIA.

My Sister arrived!

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

She will be here immediately, but I came to let you know beforehand, that the Abbess insists upon my being present at the interview.

CECILIA.

You are your own mistress ; I have no secrets to tell her.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

Secrets ! As to that, my dear girl, we know very well that you keep nothing secret from us ; your disposition is to detest concealment——Well, it is just what I said to my lady Abbess this morning, you are just like me——your heart is in your hand !——your heart is in your hand ; therefore, I only remain here, because it is the rule of the house.——Well, my dear girl, no affecting scenes, I pray you ; we expect courage and cheerfulness from you.

CECILIA.

As to courage, I have given proofs——but as to cheerfulness, I hope you will dispense with it.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

O, we never dispense with those things of which we set the example ; so that you must not expect indulgence from me on that head.—— (*She laughs.*)

CALISTA, *aside*.

There was a stroke lost.—What a pity the community were not here, how they would have laughed!—

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

Sister Calista, leave us ; Miss St. Firmin is coming.

CALISTA:

I hear a noise.—

CECILIA:

Ah, it is my Sister!—

CALISTA, *low to Cecilia*.

Farewell, dear Cecilia ; summon up all your spirits.— (*She goes out.*)

SCENE VIII.

CECILIA, MOTHER WINNIFRED, MISS ST. FIRMIN.

MISS ST. FIRMIN, *running*.

WHERE is she? where is she?—

CECILIA.

Ah, Sister!

MISS ST. FIRMIN, *running into her arms*.

Cecilia, my dear Sister, in what a state do I find you!

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

In very good health, I assure you. Truly Miss, our dear Sister Cecilia is a little faint; she edifies our whole house, and therefore is beloved and cherished.—O, she is our spoiled child.— (*She laughs.*)

MISS ST. FIRMIN, *looking attentively at Cecilia.*

How dreadfully pale!—

CECILIA.

The surprise—the joy!—

MISS ST. FIRMIN.

How you are changed!—

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

It is only this day.—She is commonly
vermilion, like a little Jesus in wax.—

CECILIA.

Dear Sister, I repeat to you, that the pleasure of again seeing you, has thrown me into agitations, which must affect my looks.

MISS ST. FIRMIN.

You love me to that excess!—Ah, Cecilia, have I reason to think so?—When you forsake me—when, to-morrow—
But, for the last time, may I not converse with you without witnesses?

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

It is forbidden by our rules, Miss.

MISS ST. FIRMIN.

What, Madam, do you propose to remain ?

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

I am obliged to remain.

MISS ST. FIRMIN.

I am sorry on your account, Madam ; for in that case, I certainly shall not restrain myself ; and, perhaps, may say some things which will displease you.

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

You certainly banter, Miss ; I have too good an opinion of your politeness, to believe——

MISS ST. FIRMIN.

It is fine talking of politeness, indeed, when there is an attempt to wrest from me for ever, the greatest happiness of my life ! Hear me, my dear Cecilia, hear me !——It is yet time, you are still free ; if you persist in your resolu-

tion, you will drive me to despair.—Do not interrupt me. I know you will tell me, “your vocation is sincere; the inclination which led you to embrace this state of life, is become a solid and violent passion;” this is your language; alas! do I not know it by heart.—I look upon sincere piety as the most sublime and most pleasing sentiment of which the human mind is susceptible; without it, virtue is always uncertain, and our happiness imperfect: But, without engaging yourself, without making vows, are you not your own mistress, to lead what kind of life is most agreeable to you?

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

The case is quite different, Miss, the whole merit lies in the sacrifice, in the vows.—

MISS ST. FIRMIN.

That is the merit only of a moment, and a merit which at eighteen years of age, can only be the effect of enthusiasm or seduction. Let us be free, and then voluntarily, and from

choice, but without being bound by oaths, practise all the virtues, and follow all the austerities of the Cloister; we shall have the additional glory of not acting as slaves, and the happiness of offering to the Supreme Being, the homage of the heart and mind, which is the only one worthy of him. But I very well know, my dear Cecilia, how little you are to be affected with all these reasons.— I have still some others to offer you. You have a feeling heart; cannot you be sensible to the pleasing happiness of doing good, to the employing a considerable fortune for the relief of the unhappy?

CECILIA.

What do you mean?—Mediocrity has been my portion.—

MISS ST. FIRMIN.

Well, Sister, if your lot was changed; if you found yourself a rich heiress; if Heaven placed an immense fortune in your hands; if it was in your power to be useful to the world, to the unfortunate?—

CECILIA.

What do I hear!—Sister, explain yourself.—

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

Then she might be the benefactress of a convent.

MISS ST. FIRMIN.

To enrich those who have taken a vow of poverty, I cannot think is the best use that can be made of a fortune.—But to found hospitals; to be employed in forming establishments useful to humanity; to make regulations; to preside at the execution of them; to watch over them; to employ our whole attention on them;—these are the schemes which suit the soul that is truly pious, noble, and benevolent, and are not to be accomplished in a private retreat. In short, Sister, I must speak to you without evasion; our Uncle is dead, and has left us a splendid fortune.—This new destiny imposes new duties upon you; while, useless in the world, we may pursue our own incli-

nations; but the possibility of assisting the unfortunate, and setting a good example, ought to tear us from the most beloved solitude. Alas! when we can live for the happiness of others, is it possible, that we should desire to live for ourselves alone?——Cecilia, you are silent; but I see your tears flowing.——Ah! say, what am I to hope?——

CECILIA.

What, is it possible?——Sister!——Good God!

MOTHER WINNIFRED.

I am sure Sister Cecilia will not suffer herself to be tempted.——(*Aside*) I must run and acquaint the Abbess; the danger seems threatening.
(*She goes out hastily.*)

MISS ST. FIRMIN.

What, my dear Cecilia, do you still hesitate? Ah, Sister, what can open your eyes? Has reason and friendship lost all their influence over you? Listen then to compassion; I die if you accomplish this dreadful sacrifice!——I can enjoy no happiness without you.——Take pity on my weakness, if

it is a weakness.—It is your Sister, it is your friend, who conjures you, upon her knees! (*She throws herself at her feet.*)

CECILIA, *raising her.*

Sister—O Sister!—If you could see into my soul!—Ah, let me breathe one moment.

MISS ST. FIRMIN.

Cecilia—go on.—

SCENE IX.

MISS ST. FIRMIN, CECILIA,
CALISTA.

CALISTA, *running.*

AH, what do I hear, my dear Cecilia?—

MISS ST. FIRMIN.

Alas! Cecilia has not yet declared.—

CALISTA.

I must speak for her. (*To Miss St. Firmin*)
Notwithstanding all her discretion, I have
been able to see into her heart; and the con-
dition in which I perceive she is at present,
confirms my suspicions.

CECILIA.

Ah, Sister! Ah, Calista!——

MISS ST. FIRMIN.

Well?

CALISTA, *to Miss St. Firmin.*

To add to your fortune, to obtain your
lover for you, to remove the obstacle which
the avarice of an unjust mother opposed to
your happiness, Cecilia sacrificed herself; her
passion for retirement is only a pretence.——

MISS ST. FIRMIN.

Cecilia!——Good God!——(*She falls
back upon a chair.*)

CECILIA, *catching her in her arms.*

Sister!——my dearest friend!——judge
of my happiness at this instant!——

MISS ST. FIRMIN.

What, sacrifice yourself for me!—Such a cruel, yet dear proof of matchless affection!—How could I suffer myself to be deceived? And how could you think of securing my happiness by sacrificing your own?—The excess of your generosity, made you guilty of cruelty and injustice; separate your fate from the fate of your friend! Surely you could not think that I must share all its horrors, and that our destinies are the same?

CECILIA.

Perhaps I have erred—but in my place, my Sister would have acted as I have done.—

CALISTA.

What an event! to me, how joyful! but to me only. The Nuns are enraged at it; the narrative of Mother Winnifred has thrown the whole house into an alarm: they were holding a council when I came away, and you will soon see the Abbess—here she is.—

SCENE X.

CECILIA, MISS ST. FIRMIN, CALISTA, MOTHER WINNIFRED, ABBESS.

ABBESS, *to Miss St. Firmin.*

MISS, it is time to put a stop to the scandal you have occasioned in my house, by vainly attempting to seduce one of my Novices. I must beg the favour of you to withdraw. *(To Cecilia)* And you, my dear child, I know what courageous resistance you have shewn; it adds to my esteem for you, and likewise to that of the whole community.

CECILIA.

If that is the only title by which I can obtain it, Madam, they are mistaken, and I am not worthy of it; I am going to follow my Sister, and never to leave her more.

(She embraces her.)

ABBESS:

What, Cecilia, are you capable of such unbecoming weakness?

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MOTHER WINNIFRED.

No, no, it is a wicked temptation, of which she will repent; I dare say she will.—

MISS ST. FIRMAN.

Come, Sister, let us delay no longer.

CECILIA.

One moment.—(*To Calista.*) My dear and amiable Calista, my joy would be pure and compleat this happy day, if I were not to part from you; if mere prudential motives detained you here, friendship offers you an asylum; vouchsafe to accept it.—

ABBESS, *to Cecilia.*

What! you dare in my presence—

CALISTA.

Don't be uneasy, Madam, my answer will satisfy you. (*To Cecilia*) You fill my heart with gratitude; but I do not envy your fortune, and I am satisfied with my own, which nothing can alter. Virtue will be a source of happiness to me in this place, and to you, in a more splendid scene; there can be no felicity without it, as you will experience amidst pomp and tumult, and I in solitude and obscurity.

THE END.

**THE
GENEROUS ENEMIES,**

A COMEDY

IN TWO ACTS.

THE PERSONS.

The Marchioness of AYLESMORE.

CIDALIA.

The Baroness of TRAZILE.

DORINDA, *Sister-in-law to the Baroness.*

MELITA, *a relation of the Marchioness.*

VICTORINA, *the Marchioness's maid.*

*The Scene is at Paris, in the Marchioness's
house.*



THE
GENEROUS ENEMIES
A COMEDY.

Un Sexe né pour plaire est il fait pour hair ?

Le prix du silence, Comedie de Boissy.

ACT I.

SCENE FIRST.

The stage represents a Saloon.

THE MARCHIONESS, VICTORINA.

MARCHIONESS, *holding a paper and glancing over it.*

WHAT a number of visits !—Good God, what a list !—How happy am I not to have seen all these people—One half of their names are unknown to me.

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VICTORINA.

You have only forgot them, Madam ; the natural effect of three long years absence!——

MARCHIONESS.

You do not seem to regret leaving Sweden, Victorina.

VICTORINA.

There is no regretting any place but Paris.——Was not you yourself, Madam, delighted yesterday, on your arrival, at passing the charming barrier?

MARCHIONESS.

Ah, Victorina! the most pleasing moment of my life is, when I have the happiness of finding myself encircled in the arms of my father and mother, who are so deserving of my affection!——With what goodness did they condescend to meet me, and made a journey of a hundred leagues that they might see me two days the sooner!——How great was my surprise and joy on perceiving their carriage, and rushing from my own to throw myself at their feet!——How I pity those

obdurate hearts, which do not feel, with all its force, that delicious sensation, filial love; that pure and earliest inclination, which is impressed upon the soul, even before reason makes it a virtue; and which gratitude and use must in time render so pleasing, so dear, and so sacred.

VICTORINA.

I flatter myself, Madam, that you will not again leave a family, who place all their happiness in you.—Upon my faith, if the Marquis returns to his embassy in Sweden, and asks my opinion, I will advise him to leave us here.—What do you think Madam?

MARCHIONESS.

It is surely disagreeable to leave our country; but, Victorina, it is pleasing to discharge our duty. The reward is always greater than the sacrifice; and have I not experienc'd it? When I followed the Marquis, I own I set out oppress'd with grief; but at present, how am I rewarded for all I have suffered, by

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his confidence, his gratitude, his warm and tender friendship? That sacrifice has procured me his esteem; it has even made me more dear to my family, to my friends, and of greater consequence in the eyes of the world; my heart, my vanity ought to be equally gratified: I find myself again restored to all I love, and more worthy of being beloved. Can we pay too dear for such happiness?—

VICTORINA.

You are right, Madam; and I see, that if we were to consider our own advantage only, we should act always the worthy part, by which, sooner or later, we shall be sure to succeed. The pleasure you had last night and this morning, in meeting your relations and friends again, receiving their encomiums, replying to their questions; the tears of joy you made them shed, the transports you inspired—you could not have enjoyed but for this journey and long absence; besides, the opera and the plays, of which you were tired when we set out, will now have all the advantage of no-

velty, and will charm you as much as they did the first year of your marriage.

M A R C H I O N E S S.

So that you see, Victorina, people frequently grieve at what in the end proves a source of some good. How happy should we be, if we had more courage and resignation ! I am rewarded for what I have done ; and you likewise are, my dear Victorina, by having followed me ; this proof of your attachment, has secured to you my sincerest friendship. You was a great resource to me in a foreign country ; we talked of France, and frequently conversed together ; and since you have convinced me of the goodness of your heart, and the excellence of your sentiments, I promise you I will continue that practice.

V I C T O R I N A.

Well, Madam, will you give me leave, then, to hazard a question, which I would not otherwise have presumed to ask ? — I know how much you love Madam Cidalia ; I saw her

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but for a moment, when she was here yesterday, but I thought she looked melancholy, and much changed!—Is she not as happy as she was formerly?

MARCHIONESS.

Alas! she is much to be pitied; she has been at variance these two years with her most intimate friend.

VICTORINA.

Her friend that married again, and who is now called the Baronefs of Trazile?

MARCHIONESS.

The same.

VICTORINA.

O my God, how forry I am; they loved one another so much; they were so amiable!—

MARCHIONESS, *looking at her watch.*

It is ten o'clock, Melita is not come, and I have two visits to make before dinner.—

VICTORINA.

Time seems to have made no change upon her; I remember you used to scold her for—

merly, for not being exact in keeping her appointments. How she used to make you loose patience, and laugh at the same time, during the first year of her marriage, when you was her *Chapron*! —— And how she laughed at your instructions, because you was almost as young as she! ——

MARCHIONESS.

She is only twenty-three years of age; but notwithstanding she is so young, and her manner is sometimes giddy, she has excellent good sense; besides, she is open, ingenuous, and has a good heart! —— I hear somebody coming —— Perhaps it is she.

VICTORINA.

It is, Madam.

MARCHIONESS.

Leave us, Victorina.

SCENE II.

MARCHIONESS, MELITA.

MARCHIONESS.

SO, you are come at last; I have been waiting an hour for you.

MELITA.

I staid on purpose to prove to you, that absence has no effect upon me, and that I am always the same.

MARCHIONESS.

You might have saved yourself that trouble, for I always knew you was incorrigible.

MELITA.

Very well!—Now I must have a short lecture, then you will embrace me, and I shall have resumed all my rights; for that was the manner with which our interviews used to begin formerly.

MARCHIONESS.

I shall keep the lecture for you till another

opportunity. Let us talk of Cidalia; tell me all that you know of that extraordinary rupture.

MELITA.

She wrote to you, did she not mention it?

MARCHIONESS.

She only told me, she was very much to be pitied; that she never could be comforted for the loss of a friend, who would always be dear to her, and whose place in her heart could not again be filled up. The letters of the Baroness were nearly to the same effect; in short, I have not been able to obtain either from the one or the other, the least explanation of the grounds of the quarrel: but people often speak what they dare not write; and you who have not been absent from them, must be better informed than I.

MELITA.

I have neither been deficient, I assure you, from regard for them, nor from motives of curiosity; and have questioned both of them, with indefatigable perseverance: but I have not been able hitherto, to wrest the smallest

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proof of confidence from either of them, upon the subject. Tho' they have quarrell'd, they seem still to regard each other, and to be still animated by the same disposition.

MARCHIONESS.

What a pity, that two people of such distinguished merit, should cease to agree ! How can any one break ties, which have been framed on a conformity of principles and dispositions ! Alas ! if such an agreeable chain is not durable, where is there a happiness to be found, upon which we can depend ?

MELITA.

In short, I cannot give you any positive particulars of the grounds of this extraordinary quarrel ; but I will inform you what are the conjectures of the world, as well as my own. In the first place, it is believed, and with great probability, that the principal cause of the falling out, was the marriage of the Baroness, tho' the rupture did not blaze till eight months after.

MARCHIONESS.

Cidalia might with reason disapprove of the choice of her friend ; the bad character of the

Baron, the smallness of his fortune, should have made her look upon this marriage as a very great folly.

MELITA.

The event has but too well justified such an opinion; it is alledged, that the Baroness is very unhappy in her family, and that her fortune is in disorder!—Do you know the Sister of her Husband?

MARCHIONESS.

Dorinda?—No; but I have heard her spoken of very badly.

MELITA.

I have no doubt that the rupture of Cidalia with the Baroness, is entirely her work: there is some enormity in her conduct which time will discover. One thing is certain, that Dorinda detests Cidalia; that she abuses her without any reserve; and has been able to persuade the generality of people, that the fault lies entirely on her side. She does not accuse her of any particular fact; but ca-

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lummy can assume such various shapes !—— Probably, not being able to prove any thing, Dorinda only employs vague accusations against the heart and temper of Cidalia : She says nothing positively, but makes a great deal to be understood.——A mysterious air, a sigh, an exclamation, have often been known to blacken innocence more successfully, than lies told with the most minute details. In short, Dorinda makes it believed, that nothing but delicacy prevents her from speaking more plainly ; and thus by detestable art, seems to spare her whom she oppresses.

MARCHIONESS.

Horrid hypocrisy !——How can it deceive ?——How can any one presume to say, they do not hate the person whose reputation they mangle ?——What vexation this melancholy detail has given me !——And this wicked, artful woman, in short, this Dorinda, it is said, fills up the place of the gentle, amiable Cidalia, in the heart of the Baroness !

MELITA.

No, do not believe it; artifice may subdue, but never can attach. The Baroness yields to the guidance of her Sister-in-law; her eyes are fascinated, her reason is seduced; but in spite of intrigue and wickedness, Cidalia is always at the bottom of her heart.

MARCHIONESS.

And you think it is impossible to reconcile them?

MELITA.

I am convinced of it. Neither of them complains of the other; they have imposed on themselves an inviolable silence about the motives of their variance; how then can they be reconciled?—They have neither anger nor resentment against each other, but they are both firmly determined never to meet again; and hitherto they have inflexibly rejected every attempt made by their friends for that purpose. I, who love both of them, have spared no pains to accommodate them; and I have quarrelled with both twenty times, from vexation at my want of success. At last, I gave

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it up, and I plainly see that their purpose is not to be shaken. However, as you was the person next to the Baronefs whom Cidalia loved the most, perhaps you may be more successful ; I wish it, but I have no great hopes.

MARCHIONESS.

I saw both of them yesterday for a moment. The Baronefs is to be here this morning, and begged I would give her leave to introduce her Sister-in-law to me ; but I own to you, that such a third person will be very disagreeable.

MELITA.

I plainly see Dorinda in that ; she has heard of your friendship for Cidalia, and does not choose that you should converse in private with the Baronefs.

MARCHIONESS.

Very well, with all my heart ; I shall say before her, all that I would have said in her absence.

MELITA.

As you do not know her, I will describe her exactly to you. She has, what the world

calls spirit, and her manner is excellent; that is to say, she expresses, with ease, the dozen little, common complimentary phrases, which you had the goodness to teach me formerly in eight days; and besides, she is fond of telling some stories every now and then, the zest of which consists in exposing to ridicule some person in company. She shews great attention to her acquaintance, and politeness to those people whose importance is well established; but for any other, she affects a disdain which reaches sometimes to the most ridiculous impertinence. She can never be desirous of forming an intimacy from taste or esteem, but is led to it either by interest, or the opinions of others. People can only be agreeable in her eyes, in proportion as they happen to be in the present mode, and must shine in a particular circle to please her; if they succeed there, they may become tiresome to her in private, without her being displeased: So that, by an excess of absurd vanity, she has renounced that natural right, of which the most modest cannot deprive themselves, the right of judg-

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ing. It is alledged, that she is capable of behaving extremely well, because she passes her life in making visits and writing cards. As she is whimsical, she is likewise said to be engaging, but the truth is, she has a very plain person, her bad heart has spoiled her understanding; incapable of knowing the value of real merit, an admirer of trifling accomplishments, she is insensible to distinguished qualities, and envious of superiority. She has, by artifice and numberless intrigues, gained some partisans. The circle of her acquaintance is extensive, but she has made a great many enemies; and she has not a single friend upon whom she can depend.

MARCHIONESS.

What a dreadful picture! and unhappily it resembles more than one original. How many hearts are corrupted by vanity!—

MELITA.

It seldom corrupts any but those of slender abilities, and must improve superior un-

derstandings. The pride of a fool is always the effect of a mean and blind impulse ; its purpose is trifling, its means contemptible ; and the vexation at not being able to obtain brilliant success, produces that base and black envy by which it is characterized and punished. But the pride of a man of understanding, is intelligent, noble, and sublime ; and aiming only at great things, he may lead to them by the accuracy of his calculations, which often serve instead of virtue. He will banish vice, he will be benevolent, he will esteem forgiveness his greatness glory ; in short, desirous of the only admiration which is flattering, and which is granted only to real merit, he will do from motives of ambition, what is done by virtuous souls to gratify the happy dispositions they have received from nature.

MARCHIONESS.

Do you know, my dear Melita, you astonish me ? Absence has deprived me these three years of the pleasure of conversing with you ; but that time which has appeared so long to me, you have usefully employed in

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cultivating your understanding ; and I own to you, that this conversation has greatly added to the opinion which your letters had already given me of your good sense.

MELITA.

Should you be surpris'd at this change ? Am not I become a mother during your absence ?——What a revolution has that endearing title occasioned in my ideas !——It has been worth ten years experience to me. If you knew to what excess I already love that infant, that cannot understand me ; that object of all my reflections, and of my most pleasing projects ;——she fixes my attention on what is to happen, by the satisfaction which I discover there, and which she alone promises me. I mean to educate her ; my girl shall never leave me. I must endeavour to become capable one day of discharging those duties which I have impos'd upon myself. I instruct myself, I read, I reflect, I labour for my girl ; I may form her heart and understanding, I may communicate to her the knowledge which I acquire ; in short, she shall owe all to me. Such pleasing

hopes already make amends for all the trouble I take, and all the sacrifices I have made.

MARCHIONESS.

It is with inexpressible satisfaction, my dear Melita, that I see your happiness is secured; you no longer seek it in the factitious pleasures of tumultuous dissipation; you enter into yourself, and it is there; it is in the bottom of your heart, that nature has placed the only happiness you can find upon earth.

SCENE III.

MARCHIONESS, MELITA,
VICTORINA.

VICTORINA, *to the Marchioness.*

MADAM, the horses are put to,

MARCHIONESS.

What o'clock is it?

VICTORINA.

Past twelve, Madam.

MARCHIONESS.

I must go out. (*To Melita*) You will dine with me; you will wait 'till I come back?

MELITA.

Yes; and in your absence I will receive your visits. Don't you expect the Baroness?

MARCHIONESS.

My God, yes; and perhaps Cidalia will likewise come; she must pass by the little staircase, that the Baroness may not meet her.—

MELITA.

Don't be uneasy; I shall give the necessary instructions. Victorina and I will chat in the mean time.

MARCHIONESS.

Farewell, then; I leave you, but I will be back again in about an hour.

SCENE IV.

MELITA, VICTORINA.

MELITA.

LET us wait here to receive the first of the two that comes, whether it be Cidalia or the Baroness, and then go and give orders for the other; but at present, Victorina, tell me a little of Sweden, I pray you; of your Mistress, and of the kind of life you led. I am impatient to hear the particulars. I asked the Marchioness a thousand questions yesterday, but she answered with so much reserve, that I am but half satisfied. She pretends, she was happy there; happy at Stockholm! and for three years; happy for so long a time, and at such a distance!—I can scarcely believe it, I own.

VICTORINA.

Yes, Madam, she has told you the truth. During the whole three years, I have never once seen her out of humour.

MELITA.

She has so much courage and good sense—but how could she relish a country where she had no society but Swedes?—She knew nothing of their language, and of course could hold no conversation.

VICTORINA.

Almost all the people about court speak French ; and my Lady said, that virtue and accomplishments are of every country.

MELITA.

But her husband, who, between you and I, is of a violent, jealous temper, must have tormented her ; she was there entirely given up to his authority, without either friend or relation ; she must have suffered severely, I am certain.

VICTORINA.

By no means, Madam. The Marquis was so affected with the sacrifice my Lady made, by quitting her family and Paris, that grati-

tude made him quite another man. The Marchioness completely subdued him in Sweden, by her gentleness, her even temper, and the charming manner with which she did the honours of his house ; and more particularly, by never seeming one moment tired, or to have regretted the part she had taken. In short, the Marquis has as much esteem and confidence in her at present, as he had passion and disquiet formerly ; and his only solicitude is to make her happy.

M E L I T A.

That is the advantage which is to be obtained, by discharging our duty with a good grace ; domestic peace, and the admiration of the world, which frequently leads us astray, but always approves of what is right. —But, Victorina, I hear the noise of a carriage ; 'tis surely the Baroness. After all, as she is to bring her sister-in-law with her, I have no desire to see her. Do you remain here, and beg of her to wait : I will go into the Marchioness's closet, and receive Cidalia if she comes. The private staircase is in the wardrobe ?

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VICTORINA.

Yes, Madam.

MELITA.

Very well.

(She goes out.)

VICTORINA.

What precautions to prevent two people, who so greatly loved each other, from meeting ! What changes may happen in the course of three years !——I hear somebody coming ; it is probably these ladies. Just so ; there is the Baroness, and undoubtedly her sister-in-law with her.

SCENE V.

BARONESS, DORINDA, VICTORINA.

BARONESS, *to Dorinda.*

SHE is not here.——

VICTORINA.

My lady is gone to her Mother's, but she will be home presently.

BARONESS.

Very well, we will wait. (*Victorina goes out.*) I own to you, my dear Dorinda, that the thoughts of this conversation with the Marchioness, disturbs me very much; I should be glad to escape from it. She will talk to me of Cidalia, and ask me a thousand questions, to which I cannot answer, and which will only serve to renew my vexation.

DORINDA.

Your vexation!—You should detest Cidalia; how can she still preserve any right to affect or disturb you, after having lost every title to your esteem?—

BARONESS.

You have opened my eyes with regard to her; you have proved to me, that she deceived me; but she loved me formerly.—I loved her so tenderly! The remembrance of it cannot be effaced from my heart; and will always preserve me from hatred.—No, I cannot hate her!—

DORINDA.

The more you loved her, the greater is her

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ingratitude, and your resentment should be the more implacable. Injuries make deep impressions on resolute minds; and they who are capable of loving passionately, should hate with violence.

BARONESS.

True fortitude, which proceeds from a greatness of soul, knows how to conquer the passions, instead of yielding to them. Hatred and vengeance are in my eyes, shameful and criminal weaknesses. Woe to the person who is proud of being susceptible of hatred; it shews at the same time a blackness of heart, and a defective understanding. What, to derive a self complacency from cherishing a horrid sentiment, which torments and tears us in pieces; to have our attention taken up by the unhappy object that has excited it; to wish him nothing but what is grievous; to say nothing of him, but what is hurtful; to be afflicted at his success, and to enjoy his faults and misfortunes!—O heaven! can the heart which abandons itself to such horrid inclinations, taste one moments repose; and is it not equally base and inhuman?

DORINDA.

That ferocious hatred which you have been describing, strikes me with horror, and I cannot conceive such to exist; but I only spoke of the hatred of generous minds.

BARONESS.

They know of none. Depend upon it, the definition I have given of hatred is not exaggerated; I could have even added some touches still more odious, in particularising the excesses to which a thirst of vengeance may hurry those who are inspired by it.

DORINDA.

Besides, you will have no difficulty to persuade me, that hatred ought to be overcome by virtue, and that it is incompatible with sensibility. I have enemies, but I hate nobody; and I own to you, it was without reflexion I repeated all the common place sayings which are uttered upon hatred; it was neither my heart nor my understanding which spoke to you, it was the world.

BARONESS.

Vice, as well as virtue, has a number of maxims which have passed into proverbs; but, Sister, you have too much rectitude, and too good an understanding, to adopt them. These pernicious sentences dazzle fools, and harden the wicked; but, fortunately, they are so absurd, that the slightest examination of reason is sufficient to expose their infamy, and to guard against the danger of hearing them so frequently repeated.

DORINDA.

It is certain, that before we adopt a maxim we ought to reflect, and examine it with care; especially when we live in the fashionable world, where so many bad maxims necessarily circulate, that are sown by wickedness, gathered and scattered abroad again by levity. But let us think of the Marchioness; what will you say to her?

BARONESS.

Not a syllable upon the motives of my rupture with Cidalia.

DORINDA.

Very right, no entering into particulars; I highly approve of that generosity, it is in my very soul; you know I always advised you to do so. But depend upon it, Cidalia has calumniated you with the Marchioness, so that in your place, I would not be very anxious to spare her, as you have done hitherto; and I would say, that I had the greatest grounds for complaint. —

BARONESS.

No, no; I will not expose a person that was once so dear to me. To deprive her of the esteem of her only remaining friend, would be an odious vengeance, and unworthy of me. What a triumph would it be to our enemies, if they could, by some unworthy action, induce us to quit the bounds of justice and moderation, and make us imitate a conduct which debases them. — If it is possible, that Cidalia hates me, at least she cannot despise me; I will not deceive myself; it is pleasing to me, to think that I am worthy of being regretted by the friend that has betrayed me. —

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DORINDA.

What an ascendancy she must have had over you!—Not to be able to speak of her at this time, without melting into tears! it is inconceivable!

BARONESS.

Can it be otherwise for an object whom one has loved for ten years? It is true, she is not what I believed her to be; but notwithstanding her faults, must I not always respect in her the friend whom I chose; whom I made the depositary of all my secrets; she, in short, who for so many years was the delight of my life?—Give me leave to ask you a question: If some dreadful transaction should oblige us to quarrel with a brother, or separate from a husband, could we with decency blacken their characters in the world, expose their wickedness, and, without mercy, represent them in the most odious colours? No, surely; such a conduct would shock the most indelicate. Why then should not friendship, that voluntary tie, that pure and pleasing union, demand the same delicacy of treat-

ment?—Let them cease to call it a *sacred chain*, a *sublime sentiment*, or learn better to know the extent of the duties which it imposes.

DORINDA,

Such principles are not new to me. What sacrifices have I not made to friendship? I dare say, that my manner of feeling is not common : I have given proofs.—But I own to you, I have an animosity against Cidalia, which astonishes myself; for the personal injuries I have received, never inspired me with such dislike. It would seem, that my friend must be attacked, to rouse my resentment. If I was the object of Cidalia's aversion, you should see in me nothing but coolness and generosity; but she detests you, and I cannot forgive her.—

BARONESS.

She detests me!—No, do not believe it; no, a fatal jealousy, an unhappy passion, may have misled her; but I am certain she does

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not hate me.—Recollect only the proofs of concern she shewed about three months ago, during my last illness; she came every day into my anti-chamber; she passed two nights there; my people saw her weeping, notwithstanding every effort to conceal her tears. Every instant her heart betrayed her—and when she was told that I was out of danger, her joy, her transports were such, as to occasion a revolution which made her sick in her turn!

DORINDA.

I recollect all these particulars; and I am too sincere to dissemble, when I tell you, that I saw nothing in her conduct but disgusting deceit!—My brother was provoked at it as well as I; and I remember too, that when you was recovering, you wrote to her to request an interview (for you burnt with impatience to see her, and be reconciled to her) but she refused you. Was not that giving the lie to all those vain protestations of affection, which she had made to you? Was it not owning, that she had played that farce

to impose upon the public, and to make herself of consequence?

BARONESS.

No, she was perfectly sincere in her attention to me; she would not see me, because she was afraid to come to an explanation; her refusal only proves to me, that she knew the impossibility of justifying herself.

DORINDA.

She might at least have expected to be able to abuse you again. She depended too much upon your penetration, and not enough upon your heart. But, now we talk of her, I have been told a very extraordinary piece of news this morning; she wishes to have her brother married, but you will never guess to whom.

BARONESS.

To whom is it?

DORINDA.

To the daughter of a man who owes his fortune to you; of a man, to whom, by your credit, you have done most important services two years ago.

BARONESS.

Mr. Sainval?

DORINDA.

The same. You know, that Cidalia always values herself upon her excessive affection for her brother; and you know the romantic turn she gives to every thing which regards him. She therefore declares, that the happiness of her brother, and her own of course, depend upon this marriage; and that she has the most sincere and affectionate regard for this young person.—Then the particular detail, and the tender expressions—Her brother happy!—An agreeable sister-in-law for her!—The felicity of finding a friend in the wife of her brother!—The children of her brother, that must be to her as her own!—In short, a pathetic emphasis, and all the common place phrases exhausted upon the dear ties of brother and sister, sister-in-law, children, and nephews!—You understand all that?

BARONESS.

But all this, in the main, seems to me very

natural. The daughter of Mr. Sainval is indeed a charming girl, from figure, talents, and disposition,

DORINDA.

Then she has five thousand pounds a year.

BARONESS.

I suppose Cidalia knows nothing of my intimate connexion with Mr. Sainval?

DORINDA.

Tho' this connexion has not been made till after your rupture with her, she is informed of it. She mentioned the other day, in presence of twenty people, that there was a great obstruction to this union; but she imagined, however, that Mr. Sainval, on reflecting, would think, that on the present occasion it would be better to consult his daughter than your particular resentment.

BARONESS.

They have told you a falsehood! If Cidalia could be capable of so mean a suspicion, she has too much spirit to declare it!

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DORINDA.

She has much more cunning than spirit ; and in this very way has given much stronger proofs of her want of address. I have not told you all that I know upon the subject. — I spare your weakness, and I respect your prejudice. — Besides, there are things of so black a nature, that I would not repeat them without reluctance. — I have more moderation and reserve than you imagine. — She is a dangerous woman, you may depend upon it. — I own, that she is captivating, her manners are pleasing, and graceful ; her expression noble, but rather too sententious, yet even that defect gives her an appearance of sense and solid reason, which imposes on the world ; she tires, but she commands respect. — As she has not wit to shine, she is desirous of being valued for her good sense ; and to this art, adds that of concealing a cold and vindictive spirit, with the deepest dissimulation, under a pleasing exterior. But to return to the instance I quoted to you, on the subject of Sainval ; ask your

husband when he returns, if it is a story: I have been assured that several of his friends were present at the conversation,

BARONESS.

Is it possible that she could be so cruelly unjust to me?—If she said so, she is the more guilty, as I am sure she could not think it.—Let us change the subject; Sister, I pray you never speak to me of her more.—Tell me, is not your brother to return from the country to-day? has he written to you?—

DORINDA.

He has not, and I do not even know where he is.

BARONESS.

I know no more than you. Only think, he set out in a hurry, without acquainting me beforehand; and during the fifteen days he has been absent, he has not condescended to write to me once!—Alas! I am not happy in any respect!

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DORINDA.

He certainly will soon return.——

BARONESS.

Truly, his affairs are in such disorder, they should bring him speedily back!——Do you know if Mr. Sainval is in Paris?——As I arrived so late last night from the country, I did not send to him.——

DORINDA.

Yes; he came to wait upon you, but you was with the Marchioness, and I received his visit.

BARONESS.

Don't I hear a carriage coming into the court?——'Tis probably the Marchioness.

DORINDA.

She has made us wait rather long.—— You will present me; I am curious to see her. I am told she is vain of having been in Sweden, and proud of having followed her husband. These women of elevated sentiments,

always call their duties, sacrifices; it is very extraordinary.

BARONESS.

And is it not a sacrifice to tear herself from the bosom of a family she loves, and by whom she is adored?——But here they come; 'tis she.

SCENE VI.

DORINDA, BARONESS, MARCHIONESS.

MARCHIONESS.

I am vexed at having detained you so long, but I was obliged to wait for my mother.—
(*To Dorinda*) I depend upon the usual indulgence of the Baroness, and it is only to you, Madam, that I must direct my apology.

DORINDA.

I share in all the sentiments of my sister, and I flatter myself, Madam, that for the

future, you will behave to me as you do to her.

MARCHIONESS.

Since you forbid compliments, allow me Madam, to speak to the Baroness on a subject in which I am interested beyond expression; she knows my sincere friendship for Cidalia and——

BARONESS.

I foresee your questions; I will answer them, and open my heart to you as much as I can.——Reasons which I will not, nor ought not to enter into, have for ever separated me from a friend whom I regret, and whom nothing can restore. I do not accuse Cidalia; I only lament my fate.——Let it be sufficient for you to know, that your friendship for Cidalia, so far from lessening mine for you, still adds to the esteem with which you have inspired me, by confirming me in the opinion I had conceived of the solidity of your sentiments. Do not ask me farther; as to the cause, I have prescribed to myself an inviolable silence.

MARCHIONESS.

This mildness and generous moderation does not surprise me ; but how comes it, that notwithstanding all this discretion, Cidalia is so cruelly abused in the world ?——The most odious interpretations, the most horrid calumnies are circulated against her !——When you do not complain, who has a right to accuse her ?

BARONESS.

I am ignorant from whence these groundless and injurious reports can proceed ; but besides, I know that malevolence has not been more sparing to me.

DORINDA.

There is no such thing as preventing the world from forming conjectures, and judging from the probabilities they think they can perceive, or which they suppose.

MARCHIONESS.

The probabilities !——To those, by whom

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Cidalia is known, if they are not blinded either by envy or hatred, there is no *probability* that she can be thought capable of falsehood and perfidy.

DORINDA.

The enemies of Cidalia alledge, that she is in the wrong; those of my sister maintain, that Cidalia is in the right; I see nothing in this but what is very common.

MARCHIONESS.

No, Madam, Cidalia is the more easily abused, as she and her friends are incapable of making reprisals; and I can assure you, that all the world agree in pitying the Baroness.

BARONESS.

So you think that my moderation is all dissembled?

MARCHIONESS.

What is that you say, my dear Baroness? Can you conceive such a suspicion?—

I only accuse those who, under the mask of friendship, abuse and betray you ; since, far from imitating your generosity, they make use of your name to gratify their particular hatred, by endeavouring to blacken and calumniate a person, whose generous way of thinking will not permit her to oppose such insults, but with contempt and silence.

DORINDA.

These declamations, Madam, are not new to me; I recollect them ; Cidalia has communicated her warmth to you——and these violent expressions dictated by her, prove how well she preserves that admirable silence of which you make such boast.

MARCHIONESS.

I do not speak from Cidalia, Madam; and, to leave you without a doubt on that head, it is from my mother and Melita that I learnt the melancholy detail.

BARONESS.

I conjure you, let us have done with the subject.

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MARCHIONESS.

Yes, but upon condition that I may resume it again; for I wish to make you acquainted with the villany of false friends, who exasperate you in private.

DORINDA, *in a passion.*

This is too much, Madam!—Such an outrage is intollerable!—And such a neglect of decency can neither be conceived nor endured!

MARCHIONESS, *coldly.*

You astonish me, Madam!—What have I said, with which you should be displeased?—So, one cannot attempt to unmask treachery and perfidy, without offending you? For the future, Madam, since I am better informed, I shall not be wanting in those attentions, of which I did not know the indispensable obligation, and which you now claim, undoubtedly with reason.

DORINDA, *to the Baronefs.*

So, Sister, you see to what my friendship

for you exposes me; but since I am pressed in the extreme with so little discretion, I shall explain myself with that openness which is natural to me. (*To the Marchioness*) There is nothing in all this, Madam, but treachery on the part of Cidalia, and blindness in the friends that remain to her.

BARONESS.

What say you, Sister?—

DORINDA.

Yes, Madam, I despise Cidalia; I advise my Sister never to see her more. I shall not betray the secrets that are entrusted to me; I shall not expose the horrors of which I have seen the most positive proofs.

BARONESS.

Sister?—

DORINDA.

I admire the generosity and moderation of my Sister; but I cannot bear to hear her accused of weakness and injustice, and to see myself shamefully insulted. You obliged me,

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Madam, to break silence, and if I have unmasked Cidalia, you have only yourself to blame.

BARONESS, to the Marchioness.

Passion and violence run away with her!
 ——I disavow every word she has uttered!
 ——Pardon me, Sister; your natural vivacity, and undoubtedly your regard for me, have occasioned this terrible outrage, which you yourself will condemn after a little reflexion.——(*To the Marchioness*) Rage deprives her of her reason.——No, I do not reproach Cidalia; and 'tis I only that should be believed.——How dreadful the scene that each of you have been presenting to me! you both love me, yet both embitter my sorrows.——Alas! if there is not a heart upon which I can depend, at least spare me, and look upon me as the most unhappy person upon earth!

MARCHIONESS.

You unhappy!——With such a noble and feeling mind, ought you to be un-

happy?—Ah! you deserve sincere friends, heaven has preserved them to you against your will—and you will one day recover the happiness you have lost.—Yes, I dare promise it; and time will reunite two hearts, so well suited to each other.—But who comes to interrupt us?—

BARONESS.

SCENE VII.

DORINDA, BARONESS,
MARCHIONESS, VICTORINA.

MARCHIONESS.

WHAT do you want?

VICTORINA.

You are wanted in your closet, Madam!—

(in a whisper) It is Madam Cidalia.

MARCHIONESS.

That is enough. (Victorina goes out.)

BARONESS.

I must leave you.—

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MARCHIONESS.

Promise me, then, that I shall see you in the evening.—If you reject my mediation, at least do not contemn the solicitude of that sincere friendship which I have dedicated to you.

BARONESS.

It is always dear to me; and I am confident that it can mitigate my sorrows.

(They embrace.)

DORINDA, *aside*.

I am enraged.—*(Aloud.)* Come, Sister, will you go?

BARONESS.

I follow you. *(The Baronefs and Dorinda go out, attended some steps by the Marchionefs.)*

MARCHIONESS, *alone, after a short silence*.

What a conversation!—How my heart is grieved!—Poor Baronefs! How she is abused and tyrannized over by that wicked woman!—But I must go to Cidalia.—Ah! here she comes.

SCENE VIII.

MARCHIONESS, CIDALIA.

MARCHIONESS.

I Was coming to you.—

CIDALIA.

Victorina told me, that the Baroness was gone, and I came that moment. Well, my dear friend, how did you find her?—I am told, she is much changed.—Did she mention me to you? Dorinda was with her; how could she restrain herself in your presence? In short, what sort of conversation had you?

MARCHIONESS.

I am greatly pleased to hear these questions from you; they make me hope that you are inclined to place more confidence in me than I dared to expect.

CIDALIA.

Certainly, I shall not maintain that entire

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reserve with you, which I have prescribed to myself hitherto. You shall know all that I can tell without wounding those duties which delicacy imposes.

MARCHIONESS.

However, I love you sufficiently to entitle me to an unbounded confidence.

CIDALIA.

I will explain the reasons which oblige me to fix limits to that confidence, and I am sure you will approve of them. Depend upon it, it grieves me to the heart, I can only lay myself open to you by halves: I have for a great while, been obliged to dissemble my sorrows, and that constraint has cruelly added to their bitterness!——But I hear the voice of Melita; she certainly comes to call us to dinner.

SCENE IX.

MARCHIONESS, CIDALIA,
MELITA.

MELITA.
I Beg pardon, if I interrupt you; but do you know it is three o'clock?

MARCHIONESS.
Come, my dear Cidalia.—

MELITA, *to the Marchioness.*

One moment—Tell me what you said to Dorinda; she went away quite furious, and behaved most strangely to the poor Baroness in going down stairs.—Victorina, who told me these particulars, heard several violent exclamations; and among the rest, she alledges, that Dorinda several times repeated, that *your impertinence was inconceivable; that there was no name for such impertinence.* Victorina adds, that the Baroness fruitlessly attempted to silence her sister-in-law, who only

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spoke the louder, and with an air and tone of voice, equally frightful.

MARCHIONESS.

What a dreadful and hideous spectacle does a woman present, who is governed by passion, and yields herself up to transports of rage!——But we are waited for to dinner; we shall resume our conversation by-and-by. Come.——

(They go out.)

MARCHIONESS.

Come, my dear Cidalia.

One moment.——Tell me what you said

End of the First Act.

A C T II.

SCENE FIRST.

MARCHIONESS, CIDALIA.

MARCHIONESS.

NOW we are at last by ourselves, and sure of not being interrupted, I beg you will gratify my impatience, my dear Cidalia.—

CIDALIA.

I believe it is needless to mention to you the situation of my heart, my letters must have convinced you that I am not changed. That friend whom I have lost by wicked contrivance, is as dear to me as ever ; I lament her blindness, I grieve for it, it costs me my happiness ; I have been deprived of her esteem, but notwithstanding her injustice, I still preserve mine for her ; it is a benefit she despises, and it is the only consolation that

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remains to me. How cruel must they be, who can despise those whom they formerly loved ! But, alas ! it is equally distressing to be suspected of guilt, by the very person on whose opinion the greatest confidence is placed.

MARCHIONESS.

You know, then, that calumny has been employed to injure you with the Baroness ?

CIDALIA.

I own to you, I know all the particulars of that dreadful mystery ; you are the first to whom I have mentioned it, and you must not forget that you have promised me inviolable discretion. It is only with you that I can allow myself to accuse the Baroness of weakness and credulity. But if you knew with what art she is abused, how specious the appearances that have been turned against me, I am sure you would excuse her. Besides, tho' suspecting me to be guilty of the blackest treachery, she was at first desirous of coming to an open explanation with me ; she continued in the hopes that it was possible for me to vindicate myself : you know my heart ; too

proud to suffer a shadow of wrongful distrust, it was deeply wounded by hers. While she spoke to me, astonishment and indignation struck me motionless, and took from me every desire of justifying myself. My silence and coldness was taken for a tacit confession of my perfidy and ingratitude; and after that fatal interview, we ceased all farther intercourse. For some time, the loss of her confidence, and her embarrassment when we were together, had forwarned me of my misfortune; and when she declared a part of her suspicions to me, I own, that resentment at seeing myself so cruelly insulted, at first persuaded me that I should not much regret the woman who could be capable of offering me such a horrid insult; I instantly broke with her, without using either reproach or complaint, and with such a cold indifference as to make me congratulate myself. But that deceitful calm was of short duration, and I soon felt the extent of my irreparable loss.—

MARCHIONESS.

I conceive the effect of your first emotions;

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and that at that instant, you disdained to justify yourself: But how came it, that since that time you have not sought the means? Why have you not desired, why not demanded, a new explanation?—

CIDALIA.

Such is the strange caprice of my fate, that the very friendship which makes me wish it, at the same time prohibits me.—

MARCHIONESS.

Will you explain this enigma?

CIDALIA.

In two words then, it is this: My accusers with the Baroness, are her husband and her sister-in-law. By a very extraordinary accident, I have in my possession the most complete proofs of their falsehood, and all the particulars of their black conspiracy; and I cannot justify myself entirely in the eyes of the Baroness, but by producing these proofs, which would unmask two worthless people, but to whom she is attached by indissoluble ties. Ought I, then, for my own particular interest, to

to carry distress, hatred, and disunion, into the bosom of a family? Shall I tear a wife from her husband? Shall I have the cruelty to rob her of all those sentiments which can make her pleased with discharging her duties? Can I say to her, "that man, to whom you have sacrificed every thing; whom you have so passionately loved; to whom you are forever united; in short, the husband of your choice, is equally unworthy of your esteem and affection?"——Would you know such cruel language to be mine, my dear Marchioness? Would that be a proof of friendship, when the blackest hatred could not strike a more deadly blow?——I cannot justify myself, but upon these conditions; judge then of all the bitterness of my situation.

MARCHIONESS.

Ah! what do you tell me? I admire you, I approve your conduct; and even persuade myself, that in your place I would have acted as you have done. You have done nothing but your duty, I own; but, alas! how you are to be pitied!——Falsely accused

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to the object whom you hold the most dear, and obliged to leave her in an error which you can so easily destroy!——Alas, I can conceive no hopes of an accommodation at present!——and the wicked will triumph. This horrible Dorinda and her brother, will continue to applaud themselves for their wicked conspiracy; I own to you, I cannot endure that idea.——How I hate Dorinda!——Yes, almost as much as I love you.

CIDALIA.

Alas, can you compare the power of hatred with that of friendship? No, no! a calm, cold contempt, is the hatred of generous minds, and the only one of which they are susceptible. Are we not revenged of the wicked by our superiority over them? The charms of friendship, the pleasing benevolent sentiments of a noble and affectionate heart, are unknown to them; they are deprived of the happiness which we enjoy: let us not then have the faulty weakness to partake of their sufferings, in yielding to the sad

passions by which they are torn, and which belong but to them. Let them hate, let them seek vengeance; but let us pardon, let us love and do good, and we shall oblige them to envy us, even amidst their most brilliant successes.

MARCHIONESS.

Yes, you are right; hatred is a terrible delirium, and its heinousness is particularly odious and disgusting in a female. I wish, however, that by way of exception, you would allow me to hate Dorinda; she is so black, so wicked!—Tell me, why she detests and abuses you with such obstinacy? Is it from mere wantonness, or from some particular interest?

CIDALIA.

She knows that I warmly opposed the Baroness's marriage; and that I at least prevented her from foolishly giving all her property to a man unworthy of her, and who married her only for her fortune. They wanted to keep at a distance from the Ba-

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roness, a person who could give her some useful advice; they set us at variance; and my friend, seduced, blinded, and the victim of the most contemptible avidity, has, since our separation, mortgaged her whole property, and signed her ruin. At least, that is what is reported in the world; I wish to heaven these melancholy conjectures may have no foundation!——

MARCHIONESS:

Unhappy woman! She is cruelly punished for her weakness and credulity!——

CIDALIA.

She deserved a better fate. She has such a noble, feeling soul!——Notwithstanding the dreadful injuries of which she suspects me to be guilty, not one word of complaint has been heard to issue from her mouth; and she always preserves a tender regard for me. She may be blinded and seduced, but it is impossible for resentment and animosity to find admission to her heart; there never was a person who possessed in a greater degree those valuable qualities, by which the sex ought to be particularly distinguished;

indulgence, mildness, and moderation. She believes me guilty of the blackest treachery ; well, she not only has pardoned me, but I am certain she excuses me in secret, and does not think of the crimes of which I have been accused, but to find reasons by which they can be palliated. Incapable of being defective in her own principles, the frailty of others excites in her only a tender compassion.— This, then, is the friend whom I have lost ! —Who can indemnify me for such a loss ? We were both of us free, and determined to enter into no engagements ; convenience, as well as conformity of sentiments, helped to unite us ; our estates were joining, our fortunes were equal, which made it possible for us to live together in that strict intimacy, which lasted ten years. We lodged when in Paris in the same house, we passed the summer on her estate or on mine ; accustomed to be always with her, to entrust her with my most secret thoughts, finding in her all the charms of a fine understanding, and all the good qualities of the heart, persuaded, that she loved me only, and that nothing could ever part us ; my attachment to her acquired

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new strength every day, and at last became the ruling passion of my heart. Reason justified it, and vanity (for in what sentiments has it not a share) served to increase it; we were quoted as the only model of perfect friendship; the world, ever doubtful of the sincerity of female connexions, did justice to ours; and I experienced, that the general approbation helps to cherish a virtuous inclination.

MARCHIONESS.

I cannot renounce the idea of uniting you once more.—In spite of fate and wicked people, you will always love each other. Will you forego an explanation, and only consent to see her again?——

CIDALIA.

I am sure the Baroness would receive me; but how can I appear before her without justifying myself? Can I have the courage in living with her, to let her remain in an error? In supposing that she consents to pardon

me, would it be possible for me not to open my heart to her; that heart so little disposed to dissemble, and especially with her? No, no! I can be silent when at a distance from her, I ought to be so, and nothing shall make me break that cruel silence; but in her presence, I am certain I should betray myself. Let us renounce a project then which never can be realised; it must indeed be very chimerical when I can consent to renounce it.—

MARCHIONESS.

But what can they have invented against you, with a shadow of probability? I shall never be able to guess it; and I can still less comprehend how the Baroness could let herself be seduced by a falsehood which calumniated you.

CIDALIA.

With every imaginable art, and the strongest appearances, they have only been able to raise suspicions in her mind; and I alone have confirmed her in her error, by refusing to explain myself; that silence, on my part,

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must have convinced her, but I cannot conceive from whence her first doubts sprung ; I own, that in her place I never could be capable of forming such ; however, she was blinded by a passion with which I am unacquainted, I ought therefore to pity and not condemn her. Happy they, who never give up their hearts to any but gentle and moderate sentiments, and can guard against violent passions : their pleasures will always be pure, and reason will alleviate their sorrows.

MARCHIONESS.

Besides, the most lawful sentiment may by excess become dangerous and blameable, especially in a woman. The slightest deviation from sound principles, leads us frequently to dishonour ; we ought therefore to endeavour carefully to moderate the vivacity of our imagination ; and, to preserve us from the illusions which may seduce us, we ought to reflect and meditate incessantly, and subject all our sentiments to the severe laws of reason, which alone can be a secure guide. She will tell us, that being born for a state of dependance, a quiet and retired life,

our occupations should be sedentary, our tastes simple; that modesty, gentleness, and moderation, are qualities equally necessary for our happiness and our glory. A woman cannot distinguish herself but by the virtues of a Sage, an absolute government of herself, and a love of peace and justice. An exalted imagination leads the men to heroism, but precipitates the women into dreadful misconduct. The tumultuous passions and violent emotions, are dangerous and fatal weaknesses for us, and to which we cannot yield ourselves up, without ruining our principles, our reputation, and our happiness.

CIDALIA.

Yes, we are made for sensibility, not for passion; let us not complain of our lot: to love no farther than is agreeable to reason, is only to renounce those errors which cause unhappiness. But I easily forget myself in such an agreeable conversation; however, I must tear myself from hence; my bro-

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ther is certainly waiting for me at my house.

MARCHIONESS.

If this marriage which so much engages your attention can succeed, it will be a great comfort to you.

CIDALIA.

It will assuage all my sorrows; my brother is so dear to me! But I dare not flatter myself.—Somebody comes; farewell, my dear friend.

MARCHIONESS.

It is Melita.

CIDALIA.

My God! how she seems agitated!—

SCENE II.

MARCHIONESS, CIDALIA, MELITA.

MELITA.

AH! I have sad news to tell you!—

MARCHIONESS.

What is the matter?

MELITA.

The poor Baronefs must be in dreadful distress!—

CIDALIA.

O heavens! what has happened to her?

MELITA.

Her husband has been fifteen days absent; the place he was gone to, and the cause of his journey, were not known; but now all is discovered!

CIDALIA.

Well—what is it?—

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MELITA.

He set out privately for one of the sea-ports ; where he has embarked, and wrote to his wife at setting sail.

CIDALIA.

And what is his purpose ?

MELITA.

He informs her, that he is ruined ; that he is setting out for the Indies, and if he does not retrieve his fortune there, he never shall be heard of more. His unhappy wife, what will become of her ? Abandoned by the person to whom she sacrificed her all, not knowing how to conduct her affairs, beset by a crowd of creditors, obliged to sell her whole property, losing every thing at once !——

CIDALIA.

She still has a friend.——Where is she ? What is she doing ? From whom did you learn these afflicting particulars ? Are they true ?——

MARCHIONESS, *embracing her.*

I see your purpose.——I read it with the most tender emotions, in that noble affectionate heart !——

MELITA, *to the Marchioness*:

O, you have not the merit of being the only one to discover what passes there!—

CIDALIA.

But once more, my dear Melita; are you very certain of the Baronefs's misfortune?

MELITA.

I just now left a person who was with her when she received the fatal letter from her husband.

CIDALIA,

Unfortunate woman!—If I was to go to her immediately—her door would be shut against me.—(*To the Marchioness*) Write to her, my dear friend; tell her, that upon my knees I beg a moment's conversation—but undoubtedly she will refuse it! —What shall I do?—yet I must speak with her—and immediately.—Ah! for pity's sake advise me! In my present distrac-

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tion, I do not know what to do to induce her to see me.——

MARCHIONESS, *to Cidalia.*

How you tremble!——Sit down and be calm, if possible. (*Cidalia sits down.*) I will tell you what occurs to me; Melita, who is in great intimacy with her, must go and find her, and tell her, that I have something of the utmost importance to communicate to her, and by that means bring her hither.

CIDALIA.

Very well——But you must not let her know that I expect her; and don't even let her hear my name mentioned.——She lodges in this very street, and if you lose no time, my dear Melita, you will be back in a quarter of an hour.——

MELITA.

I luckily have my carriage below. Adieu; you may depend upon my zeal and activity.

(*She goes out.*)

SCENE III.

MARCHIONESS, CIDALIA.

MARCHIONESS.

NOW, my dear Cidalia, there is no obstacle which can obstruct your vindication; the Baroness, basely forsaken by a husband, whom she probably will never see again, is but too well convinced at present, how little he merited her affection; you may now open her eyes without scruple.

CIDALIA.

Yes, I can; and indeed I ought. Can I offer her the assistance of the most affectionate friendship, without an entire vindication of myself? Can she accept it from a person she does not esteem?—Yet I tremble—I earnestly desire to see her again, and at the same time I dread the interview.—She is so much to be pitied! Misfortunes add to

the delicacy of noble minds. If I was to go to her, and by informing her, perhaps aggravate her sorrows, or wound her delicacy; or add to her vexation, that of making her blush for her conduct towards me——In short, if, sowered by her situation, she should see nothing in my proceeding but a haughty generosity!——Ah! how badly would she see into my heart! Of all the instances of her injustice, that would be the most cruel.——How I am perplexed!——I am almost inclined not to see her to-day; however, if she loves me as much as she is dear to me, I shall comfort her.——I always opposed her marriage; I had the courage formerly, to prophesy to her a part of those misfortunes which she now experiences. I am sure she will recollect it herself; even the sight of me will undoubtedly be an insupportable reproach to her. Who knows if she ever can be reconciled to the sight of me!——How grievous are these reflexions!——What shall I do?

MARCHIONESS.

Truly you take a pleasure in tormenting

yourself. She always loved you, even while she thought you guilty. You may depend upon it, that the happiness of finding such a friend as you, will atone for all her sorrows.

CIDALIA.

But what shall I first say to her? where shall I begin? I persuade myself I have sufficient delicacy to save me from the fear of wounding that of another person!—Besides, the offers which I am desirous of making to her, are so natural.—But I repeat it to you, she is under misfortunes; I shall find her sensibility exceedingly awake, her distrust excessive: These are the bitter consequences of calamity, and these are the faults which it produces; they must excite the most tender compassion, and we cannot be too careful in shewing them that attention and respect which they deserve. They who can approach a person under misfortunes, without a sentiment of respect and fear, are not made to assist them, nor worthy of consoling them!—A thought strikes me—If to spare her delicacy, I was to begin by begging a favour of her?—tho' chimerical, it don't signify—

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But what kind of favour? I must think of that.—My God, don't I hear a noise?—Perhaps it is she.—I am quite exhausted.—
(*She sits down.*)

MARCHIONESS

I really doubt if you have strength to speak to her.—Ah! you well deserve to be loved!—And I think I may say to you, without exaggeration, that you are as dear to me as you will be to the Baroness in a quarter of an hour.—But what does Victorina want?

SCENE IV.

MARCHIONESS, CIDALIA,
VICTORINA.

VICTORINA.

I Come to acquaint you, Madam, that the Ladies are arrived.—

CIDALIA.

Who, Melita and the Baroness?

VICTORINA.

Yes, Madam.

CIDALIA.

Ah heaven!——(*To the Marchioness*) Hear me, my dear friend, I shall go to your closet; and will give orders, that Melita may be desired to send the Baroness to you, to whom you must not even mention my name; and while you are in conversation with her, I shall acquaint Melita in what manner I desire to be introduced.

MARCHIONESS.

I understand you.——She shall not know that you are here.

CIDALIA.

And even if she speaks of me, say, that you have not seen me since morning.

MARCHIONESS.

Do not lose time, then.——Retire.

CIDALIA.

Adieu.——Victorina, give me your arm, for truly I tremble so, and am in such agitation, I cannot walk.

(*She goes out with Victorina.*)

SCENE V.

MARCHIONESS, *alone.*

WHAT an excellent heart!—What an instructive lesson is her conduct!—Such a noble example should make the misconduct and indecent ruptures we so frequently see in the world, hated and despised.—It is said, that the example of the wicked is dangerous; but it seems to me on the contrary, that the nearer they are viewed, the greater the horror they inspire, which must be a preservative from the misfortune of resembling them; while the pleasing contemplation of virtue, seduces, affects, and captivates: and the desire of imitating what we admire, is so natural! —But here comes the Baroneſs.

SCENE VI.

MARCHIONESS, BARONESS.

MARCHIONESS, *going to meet the Baronefs.*

PARDON me, my dear friend, for having made you wait one moment; I was engaged in business of importance. I longed impatiently to see you, and to assure you, that my heart shares in all your sorrows; deign to shew a little confidence in me, I conjure you!——— (*She embraces her.*)

BARONESS, *coldly.*

Melita told me, that you had something of the most important and pressing nature to communicate to me.

MARCHIONESS.

I have nothing to speak to you of, but yourself, and in fact, nothing more interesting can engage my attention. Upon the first news of your misfortunes, I would have flown to you instantly; but I own to you, I
N ij

dreaded meeting your Sister-in-law, and I wished to see you alone.

BARONESS.

It is true, my misfortunes are great, but my courage can equal them; I shall not have recourse to any one; I am sure, my property is more than sufficient to pay my debts. I have already seen a man of business, who has given me this assurance, and that is sufficient to make me easy. With respect to fortune, I can suffer the loss of it with an indifference, which is neither affected nor surprising. I should be very contemptible, if after the losses I have sustained, I could be affected with that.

MARCHIONESS.

I well know the elevation of your mind, and the sensibility of your heart.

BARONESS.

That sensibility in future, can only be a weakness in me; I shall be able to subdue it.

MARCHIONESS.

A great misfortune ever brings to our

recollection our former sufferings.—I am persuaded, that at this instant Cidalia is more than ever present to your remembrance.—

BARONESS.

Nothing has been able hitherto, to efface her from my mind one instant.—But in short, I am tired of loving and regretting the ungrateful.—Abandoned, betrayed by all that was dear to me, I renounce the world, happiness, and friendship; I must no longer look for any thing but quiet.—Cidalia—Tell her when you see her, Madam, that that heart which she knew so tender, but now sowered and disabused, dedicates itself to indifference, and from henceforth will only hearken to reason.—Tell her, that I am calm and undeceived; that I hate society, that I shall fly from it for ever; but above all, tell her, that I no longer believe in friendship.—But, no, do not speak to her of me; may she forget me; may she be happy!—'Tis my last wish, and it is sincere.

MARCHIONESS.

She forget you!—No, do not believe

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it.—What will become of her, when she hears of your misfortunes!—To what a degree will she feel for them!—

BARONESS.

Indeed, such is my situation, that the greatest of my enemies will be obliged to pity me. But, Madam, I will tire you no longer; pardon the intrusion; I only came in consequence of the assurance given me by Melita, that you wanted to talk to me on business.—

MARCHIONESS.

How coldly you behave to me, my dear friend, wherefore do you decline the consolations of my affectionate friendship?—But the different emotions with which you are agitated, are but too natural in your present situation; I do not accuse your heart.—

BARONESS.

Ah! that heart is become inaccessible to friendship.—No, no! I no longer pretend to the happiness of being loved!—And I myself, am no longer capable of any kind of

sentiment. A hatred of life is the only one that remains.—

MARCHIONESS.

This gloomy misanthropy is too opposite to the mildness of your disposition, to be of long duration.—

BARONESS.

Somebody comes; I must retire.—

SCENE VII.

BARONESS, MARCHIONESS,
MELITA.

MELITA, *stopping the Baroness.*—

STOP one moment, I beg of you; I am charged with a commission to you.

BARONESS.

From whom?

MELITA.

I foresee your surprise—I am sent by Cidalia.—

BARONESS.

Cidalia!——And what does she want with me?

MELITA.

She is just arrived and being informed; that you was here, begged me to desire you would afford her one moment's conversation.——

BARONESS.

I see her!——Ah, I am less disposed than ever.——I will not see her, Madam.——

MELITA.

I believe she knows nothing of your misfortunes, for she has not mentioned them to me.——She only told me, that she has a favour to beg of you; that one word from you can insure the happiness of her Brother; and that she has sufficient dependence on your generosity, to apply to you with confidence.——

BARONESS.

She knows she is not mistaken——but once more I say I will not see her.——

Tell her, not to be uneasy upon that account, and that the interview she desires is absolutely unnecessary.

MELITA.

She says, she cannot accept a favour from you, unless she receives it from your own mouth.

MARCHIONESS.

My dear Baroness, you are too generous to refuse to yield in a matter of delicacy.—

BARONESS.

Let her write to me, I will answer her; that is all I can promise.—

MELITA.

See her for one instant, I conjure you.—

BARONESS.

No; I cannot endure her presence!—O heaven, don't I hear her voice?—Ah Melita, where have you led me?—This is, all a conspiracy.—It is always my fate to be

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deceived.—(She sits down. The Marchioness and Melita draw near to her. The Marchioness takes her by the hand.)

MARCHIONESS.

We shall very soon be justified in your eyes.—

MELITA, looking towards the door.

It is she——It is Cidalia ; she could not resist her impatience.

BARONESS.

So then, you compel me to see her in spite of me.—Well, let her come. After all, what need I care !——Perhaps she expects to find me dejected, humbled.——Let her come ; I will undeceive her.—

MELITA.

Come, Cidalia.—Let us go, we must leave them.

BARONESS.

What, both of you forsake me—?—

MARCHIONESS.

We will return immediately.—Come.—

(They go out quickly.)

BARONESS.

Hear me!—They have left me!—
What a base plot! such unreasonable violence! and what can be their purpose?—
O heaven! somebody comes—it is Cidalia!—Ah, let me collect the little courage I have left.—

SCENE VIII.

BARONESS, CIDALIA.

(Cidalia appears, and stops. The Baroness sinks back in her chair, turning away from Cidalia.)

CIDALIA.

(After a short silence; aside.)

HOW her uneasiness increases mine!—
I dare not approach her.

BARONESS, raising herself.

Well, Madam—what have you to say to me?—how could you desire to see me?

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If I could be of any use to you, is it not sufficient to let me know it?——

CIDALIA.

I presume to say, Madam, that the step I have taken is flattering for you, since it proves the opinion I have of your disposition; and far from humiliating me, I am pleased with it. To convince you of my esteem and confidence, can never hurt my feelings.

BARONESS.

Such language cannot but surprise me.——
But pray, Madam, what is your purpose?——

CIDALIA.

My brother is passionately in love with the daughter of Mr. Sainval; you have the most absolute influence over the mind of her father; I know that he owes his all to you; one word from you, Madam, in favour of my brother——

BARONESS.

That word is already spoken. I saw Mr. Sainval this morning, and I received his promise, that he will give his daughter to your brother.——

CIDALIA.

O heaven!—

BARONESS.

Yes, Madam ; you need not entertain the least doubt. Mr. Sainval acquainted his daughter with it immediately, and he went in search of you to give you his promise, but you was not at home ; and he was told, you was not expected before night : I persuaded him to write to you ; and you will find his letter at your house ; in which he assures you of his consent, and presses you to fix the day of marriage. I returned from the country only yesterday ; it was but this morning I knew of your intention on that head, and I immediately took the step you might desire.—

CIDALIA.

What, I owe the happiness of my brother to you!—Ah! I can no longer restrain the transports of my heart.—No, no ; resume your kindness, or restore me to your friendship!—(*Cidalia advances to embrace the Baroness, who draws back.*)

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BARONESS.

My friendship!—you have betrayed it,
despised it!—

CIDALIA.

Hear me.—

BARONESS, *moving to go away.*

I cannot, nor I will not!—

CIDALIA.

Stop.—

BARONESS.

Cease your vain efforts.—Formerly I
could pardon every thing—but now it is
too late.

CIDALIA.

Well, you no longer love me, I see it; but
in the name of that tender friendship, which
for ten years made the happiness of our lives;
in the name of that tie formerly so dear, deign
to hear me one instant.

BARONESS.

I no longer love you, ungrateful woman!
—But what have you to say to me?

CIDILIA.

That I never was guilty ; that you was deceived ; and that it was my affection for you, which prevented me from undeceiving you.——

BARONESS.

Is it possible ?——But do not hope to seduce me ; you but too well know your ascendancy over me.——

CIDALIA.

I have only one word more to say——I can shew you the most positive proof of my innocence.——

BARONESS.

Good heaven !——And why have you so long concealed it ?

CIDALIA.

I respected in my enemies and calumniators, the ties by which they were attached to you ; I preferred your peace to the happiness of being esteemed by you ;——there is all my guilt.

BARONESS.

What do I hear?—Ah, good God, is this true!

CIDALIA, *taking a letter out of her pocket.*

Will you not believe the evidence of Dorinda herself. You know her hand; read this letter,

BARONESS, *after a short silence.*

I will believe only you.—

(She rushes into Cidalia's arms.)

CIDALIA.

O, the only friend of my heart, are you then restored to me!—*(They embrace.)* Is it possible?—

BARONESS.

Ah, Cidalia!—life then can still be dear to me!—

CIDALIA.

Mine shall be dedicated to you.—But before we yield to such pleasing transports, allow me to acquaint you with my vindication. I have persuaded your heart, let me convince your reason.

BARONESS.

No, no; do not deprive me at least of the merit of being persuaded only by my affection.—Ah, even if you had betrayed me, you still loved me, all is forgotten.—Let us avoid explanations which are useless, and, perhaps, dangerous.—Cidalia, must I own it to you? my heart has betrayed itself in spite of me; I am not sorry for it; but I love rather to forget, even to pardon, than to hear a doubtful justification.—

CIDALIA.

I must recover all my rights with you, those of a sister, of a guide, in short, of a friend; that last title is worth all the rest. I come to offer you comfort, counsels, and resources; if I was not worthy of your esteem, could I have such confidence? I accept your favours; you have secured the fate and happiness of my brother; I enjoy with transport the happy effects of a generosity which I admire; but if I can in my turn be useful to you, I ought to prove that I do not deserve a

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refusal; read this letter then, I conjure you, I demand it of you. (*She gives it her.*)

BARONESS, *taking it.*

What would you say?—

CIDALIA.

Read it, I pray; I know that Dorinda and her brother, to estrange you from me, persuaded you that I was your rival, and that I only opposed your marriage from motives of jealousy; I know very well they alledged I wanted to blacken your character and ruin you with the object of your love whom you had chosen; I could not, nor ought not to have vindicated myself at that time, and you condemned me.—

BARONESS.

Good heaven!—

CIDALIA.

Dorinda explains all the black conspiracy in that letter now in your hand; she wrote it to her intimate friend, who was at that time my declared enemy; but the connections of the wicked are frail, and when they disagree, they despise themselves too much to be ever

reconciled. Dorinda quarrelled with her friend, who to be revenged, sent that letter to me; not doubting that I should employ it with you to destroy and expose the woman who had betrayed you so villaniously.—

BARONESS.

Ah, Cidalia!—Ah, let me breathe one moment.—By convincing me of your innocence, by displaying your own virtue and the truth, into what a state of humiliation do you plunge me?—What, could I offend against friendship to such excess!—That I could believe in slanders which now seem so absurd!—Ah! there was nothing wanting to complete my misfortunes; but that I should blush for myself. This last blow has exhausted all my courage.—*(She sinks into a chair.)*

CIDALIA.

What do you say? Good God! can my justification afflict and humble you?—No, it is not possible. With what can you reproach yourself? A credulity, which I must

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have had in your situation; an unfortunate error of which your heart never partook. The false opinion which they gave you of me, has only served to display your moderation, your generosity, and the most sublime virtues. When you should have hated and despised me, you was employed in securing my happiness; you insured the happiness of my brother, and you did me every service that could be expected from a sister, from a friend. What have I done, what can I ever do to equal such an action?

BARONESS.

What, you do not despise me then? You can again love me as before.—

CIDALIA.

As before!—Ah! and if possible still more, I cannot live without you.—I have made the cruel experiment.—What tears have I shed! My dear, my true friend, what reparation can you make me?—Two years separated from you.—From henceforth nothing in short

shall be able to disunite us. We never more
shall part; for it is needless now to dissemble,

BARONESS.

You are informed then of my misfortunes?

CIDALIA.

I know them all.—

BARONESS.

I know of none, since you are restored to
me.

CIDALIA.

Then I must speak to you without disguise;
and I hope, that restored to yourself and stript
of all false delicacy, you will make no ob-
jection. I insist upon your leaving your house
this evening, to come to mine, which from
henceforth belongs to you as much as to me,
as does every thing that I now possess; and
give me the charge of all your affairs. Think
well of your answer; consider, that it can give
happiness, or wound friendship; consider in
short, that without hesitation I accepted your

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kindness; that my offers are natural and common, and what you have done for me is heroic.

BARONESS.

I leave my fate to you; dispose of me, order and direct as you please.—

CIDALIA.

Ah, now I know my friend again; nothing more is wanting to my happiness.

BARONESS.

O my dear Cidalia, I no longer lament my fate; to owe every thing to you will be my happiness; you will comfort an ill-used broken heart; friendship will heal its wounds.—I shall once more know the charms of confidence!—Alas! how long have I grieved in secret.—But take back that letter; the reading it is not necessary to convince me of my injustice.

CIDALIA.

I do not desire that you should read it at present, but I conjure you to keep it.

BARONESS.

I consent; but I hope you will give me leave to send a copy of it to Dorinda; it is the only vengeance I desire to take.

CIDALIA.

I should not be sorry that she likewise knew, that I had the courage to keep this proof of her perfidy more than eighteen months without making use of it.

BARONESS.

Thou dear, thou generous friend; what this effort must have cost you; I admire it, yet I must complain of it; you left me in a fatal error which could not make me happy, and deprived me of a friend who was worth the wealth of all the world to me; yes, Cidalia, the excess of your delicacy misled you; you abandoned me to ungrateful wretches, who betrayed my confidence, who despised my affection: ah, from what sorrows would one word, a single word from you have saved us!—

CIDALIA.

Let us for ever forget these cruel sorrows; you shall not see me engaged but in the desire, and with the hope of indemnifying you for what you have suffered. But my dear friend, come, let us rejoin Melita and the Marchioness, and let them share our happiness.

BARONESS.

They will share it I am sure; I burn with impatience to inform them, come my dear Cidalia.—Ha, here they come.

SCENE IX.

MARCHIONESS, MELITA, BARONESS,
CIDALIA.

(The two first run and embrace the two friends.)

MARCHIONESS.

My dear Cidalia—my dear Baroness.

MELITA.

All our vows are accomplished!

BARONESS.

You see into our hearts then?—

MARCHIONESS.

I own to you that we have been at the door
of this saloon almost a quarter of an hour;
we could not hear you, we durst not interrupt
you; but we enjoyed the pleasure of observ-
ing you, and you cannot conceive the inex-

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pressible satisfaction we felt on seeing Cidalia embrace you. —

CIDALIA.

You enjoy your own work; your generous cares have contributed to reunite us. —

BARONESS.

What a subject for gratitude?—Do you imagine it can ever be effaced from my remembrance.—(*In shewing Cidalia.*) If you knew all that I owe to this friend whom you have restored to me! —

CIDALIA.

And my brother! — The marriage of my brother which is her work. — She spoke this morning to Mr. Sainval; she received his promise; and at what a time was she employed for my happiness? — Before our interview. —

BARONESS.

And Cidalia, ignorant of these particulars, and knowing nothing but my misfortunes,

notwithstanding my injustice, and fatal credulity, came to offer me an asylum and her fortune, and to save me from the guilty shame which such extraordinary generosity might suggest to any other mind but her's; she began by begging a slight service, which she calls an important favour.—I wish I could express to you with what art and delicacy she found the means of reconciling me to myself, and by what affecting sensibility she has been able to carry the most pleasing consolations to the bottom of a heart sowered by misfortune, and disgraced by a long chain of faults and errors. No, Cidalia, you would in vain deprive me of a sense of your superiority over me; every thing shews it; but does not this lustre which shines in you, reflect upon me! and is not the most delightful of all sentiments, that of admiring what we love.

M A R C H I O N E S S.

You are worthy of each other, and that encomium expresses every thing? You can-

not be more effectually praised than by comparing you with each other.

CIDALIA, in shewing the Baronefs.

I did not interrupt her: I was willing to let her say every thing with which she was inspired by the enthusiasm of her friendship; such exaggeration at least shews that greatness of mind, and lively sensibility by which she is characterized.—In short, my dear friends, you see how happy I am, there is nothing wanting to complete my happiness, but to see my brother, and to acquaint him with his fate. I cannot tear myself from you, but allow me to write to him, to come and find us.

MARCHIONESS.

Come into my closet, and while you are writing, I will chat with the Baronefs, I have so many questions to ask her.—

MELITA.

About Dorinda, for instance; what vengeance shall we take?

BARONESS.

You shall know. (*She takes Cidalia by the hand.*) But my dear Melita, when one recovers a friend such as this, and enjoys the happiness of being so much indebted to her, gratitude and affection fill and possess the soul so agreeably, that there is no pain in forgetting the wicked and ungrateful. No, dear Cidalia, hatred and revenge shall not disturb a life which must be dedicated entirely to friendship. No, I have no desire to live but for you; and it is impossible that any sentiment foreign from you can henceforth get admittance to my heart.

CIDALIA.

I own this return is due to me, since the attachment which unites us is the ruling passion of my soul, and at all times made the destiny of my life.

MARCHIONESS.

Come, my dear friends; come, Cidalia, write your note, for I am as impatient as you,

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to see your brother, and to be a witness of his joy.

CIDALIA.

Come, let us delay no longer; come.

(They go out.)

THE END.

PERSONS

THE

GOOD MOTHER,

A COMEDY.

IN THREE ACTS.

P E R S O N S.

Lady ORSAN.

Lord ORSAN, her Husband.

EMILIA,

AGATHA,

HARRIOT,

} *Daughters of Lady ORSAN.*

CELIA, Sister of Lady ORSAN.

Marchioness AURORA, Daughter of CELIA.

Mrs. DAVERS, Governess to Lady ORSAN'S

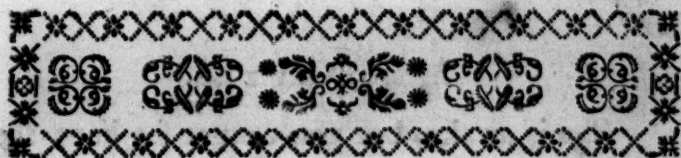
Daughters.

LUCETTA, Lady ORSAN'S Maid.

Count MONCALDE, a silent person.

Several Domestics.

Scene at Paris, in the house of Lady ORSAN,



THE
GOOD MOTHER,
A COMEDY.

Le chef-d'œuvre d'amour est le cœur d'une Mere.

M. GAILLARD.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Stage represents a Saloon.

Mrs. DAVERS, EMILIA, AGATHA,
HARRIOT.

EMILIA.

WHAT, Mrs. Davers, cannot we get
admittance to Mama? It is nine
o'clock.

Mrs. DAVERS.

She is awake, but you cannot see her; she is shut up with Madam Celia.

AGATHA.

How! with my aunt at this hour? That is extraordinary! My aunt commonly does not rise before mid-day!

HARRIOT.

For my part, when I am my own mistress, I will do as my aunt does, I will rise late too.

EMILIA.

Truly, sister, when we are so happy as to have such a mother, we ought not to propose following any other example; can we find a better model?

HARRIOT.

No—surely, but I believe it is much more easy to imitate my aunt than mama, and that is what makes me hesitate in my choice.

EMILIA.

Certainly, it is difficult to attain to perfection; but at least, Harriot, it is right to form the resolution.—

HARRIOT.

As to me, I own I have not much ambition; and then I find I shall never be perfect: is it not so Mrs. Davers?

MRS. DAVERS.

But, that is according—

HARRIOT.

That is according.—How is this; a very pleasing answer indeed, Mrs. Davers.—I may become perfect?—That is very comical.—Emilia, Agatha, do you hear? Mrs. Davers does not despair of seeing me perfect: well, I own I could not have expected it.—

AGATHA.

Such an opinion ought to encourage you.

HARRIOT.

But perhaps Mrs. Davers only said it to laugh at me.—

Mrs. D A V E R S.

No, not at all, I really think it; it is very possible that you may one day, be good, gentle, amiable, obliging, in short an accomplished girl.

H A R R I O T.

Accomplished!—O that is too much, there is no resisting this; my dear Mrs. Davers allow me to embrace you.—Accomplished!—As my eldest sister, as Emilia?—Excuse me, Agatha, if I do not quote you—you know that you are not much better than myself.

A G A T H A.

I know at least, that I cannot compare myself to Emilia; but I love her too well to be jealous.

E M I L I A.

By praising me so, sister, you only prove your excessive modesty.

H A R R I O T.

Very fine—compliments indeed.—But let us return to my future perfections; my dear

Mrs. Davers one word more upon that head if you please ; you believe then that I shall be a little angel ?

Mrs. D A V E R S.

I repeat it to you Miss, that if it happens, I shall not be surpris'd.

H A R R I O T.

But, my dear, my little dear Mrs. Davers, upon what plant have you trodden this morning ? you delight me.

Mrs. D A V E R S.

It is not that I am blind to your faults ; you are an excessive scoffer ; you are a heedless, trifling, giddy, contentious, detracting, prating girl, you talk at random ; in short, it is impossible to find a young person of thirteen more troublesome, more ridiculous, and more intolerable,

H A R R I O T, *making a very low courtesy.*

A very pretty picture, and if the likeness is good, I am in a fair way to arrive at that

perfection which you had the goodness to promise me.

Mrs. D A V E R S.

I did not promise it to you; I only said that it might be still hoped for. You are but a child, and your want of application has left you much below your age; by your understanding you are not more than seven years old.

H A R R I O T, (*laughing.*)

Seven years old!—I am only seven.—You have calculated it.—It is not seven and a half, or eight, but exactly seven?—Well, this is very comical.

Mrs. D A V E R S.

And that excessive childishness makes all your follies more excusable.—

H A R R I O T.

Surely, since I am only seven, I may expect indulgence: however, I am very glad to know this, I shall profit accordingly.

Mrs. D A V E R S.

And this childishness retards the unfolding

of your understanding. But if you love your mother, and if you have common sense, you will correct it.

HARRIOT.

I love mama with all my heart, that is certain.

EMILIA.

O I will answer for that.

AGATHA.

And I too.

Mrs. DAVERS.

If that is—

HARRIOT.

If that is!—Do not talk so, Mrs. Davers; accuse me of whatever you please, except having a bad heart.

Mrs. DAVERS.

Very well, since you love your mama, you will correct yourself, because you would not make her miserable.

EMILIA.

Is not that the consequence?

HARRIOT.

Yes, I allow it; that reasoning convinces.—

AGATHA.

Here comes Lucetta, perhaps mama wants us?

SCENE II.

Mrs. DAVERS, EMILIA, AGATHA,
HARRIOT, LUCETTA.

EMILIA.

Well, Lucetta, may we go to mama?

LUCETTA.

No, Miss, not yet.—

HARRIOT.

My God, how tiresome!

LUCETTA.

I'll engage it is a very serious conference. Madam Celia had such a look of business.— And then my lady is shut up with her, and the door locked.

HARRIOT.

Locked!

AGATHA.

Locked!

HARRIOT.

We never saw that before.

LUCETTA.

Madam Celia was here before my lady was awake, and surely Madam Celia does not get up at eight o'clock for a trifle.

HARRIOT.

O certainly.—Well, I guess what it is. It relates to something that has happened to my cousin.

LUCETTA.

The Marchioness Aurora?

HARRIOT.

Yes. My aunt is not always satisfied with her. I know that.

LUCETTA.

Indeed!

HARRIOT.

O yes, my cousin is—wait 'till I recollect exactly what it is called—my cousin is—a coquet; ay, that is the word.

Mrs. DAVERS.

O fy, Miss, do you know of what you are accusing your cousin.

HARRIOT.

Yes indeed, Mrs. Davers.—A coquet is a person who gives herself great airs, and who believes and wishes to gain admirers by that means. It is a very stupid folly in my mind,

Mrs. DAVERS.

You speak very well of coquetry, but very

ill of your cousin. Is this the way you treat a person who is absent, who loves you, and who is so nearly related to you.

H A R R I O T.

O yes, she loves me! not too much—she is jealous of my sister Emilia, I can see that; and, to provoke her, I always say in her presence, all the good I can of Emilia.—Besides, Mrs. Davers, she is proud of being a coquet, she said so to my papa the other day.

Mrs. D A V E R S.

If she is imprudent and giddy, must you therefore be a slanderer. In a word, Miss, I forbid you to speak of her in that manner. Come, let us sit down at this table, since perhaps we may still wait here half an hour. *(They place themselves round a table, and take different little works out of their work-bags. Lucretia remains standing behind Emilia's chair.)*

HARRIOT,

(After a long silence, striking a great blow upon the table.)

Ha, for this once, I have gueffed it!—

AGATHA.

My God, fister, you made me start.

Mrs. DAVERS.

What is it you mean, Miss?

HARRIOT.

I know the subject of conversation between Mama and my aunt. It regards you, Emilia.

EMILIA.

I pray you, fister, keep your conjectures to yourself.

HARRIOT.

Ha! ha! you blush.—You guess my thoughts.

LUCETTA.

But you blush likewise Miss.

HARRIOT.

In short, however, I am sure I am right; they are going to marry Emilia.

LUCETTA.

O, if that is it, what joy will be in the house.

EMILIA.

If I am so much loved, can they wish to see me change my condition, when I am so perfectly happy!—

LUCETTA.

But Miss, we shall not lose you, you will surely live here; my Lady never will part from you.

EMILIA.

I am at least certain of that; she well knows I cannot be happy, not only in another street, but in any other house than her's.

HARRIOT, (*thinking, with her elbows on the table, and reckoning with her fingers.*)

But who?—Who is it that comes here?—
Let me see—there is Mr. St. Vallery.—O he
is too ugly.—Mr. Potter? he is mighty dull,
and then he is an old bachelor, at least
thirty-five. Mr. Bevil; he has a perriwig.—
Mr. Cremy; he is a widower; I don't love
widowers.—Count Moncalde?—

AGATHA.

O fy Sister, a Portuguese, a foreigner.

HARRIOT.

But you would not let me go on, I was
going to exclude him.—Yet I am sorry for
it, because he is the only one that is amiable;
he has such a gentle noble manner—and
with such politeness—how he loves Papa and
Mama. He speaks so well of Mama.—I am
certain he thinks Emilia charming, for when
she sings or plays on the harp he is vexed if

there is the least noise in the room.—And then my brother Charles, who is so like Emilia, is his greatest favourite, and he has him always upon his knee;—I see all this without seeming to take notice.

Mrs. D A V E R S.

Have done Miss. Is it proper for a young lady to talk thus of marriage; to endeavour to discover the secrets of her family, and to publish her conjectures. Truly, you have no idea either of the discretion or modesty by which you should be distinguished.

H A R R I O T.

But, my dear Mrs. Davers, don't you remember I am but seven years old.

Mrs. D A V E R S.

Remember you, Miss, that I desire you would learn to hold your tongue, and be so good as to begin this instant. It is idle balderdash which occasions almost every indiscretion

and mischief ; besides, it deprives a woman of all her graces, and if it was possible, that a person of very great wit had that fault, in spite of her merit, she would only be looked upon as a gossip equally ridiculous and troublesome.

HARRIOT, *aside*.

Here is a very long discourse in praise of Silence.—(*Aloud.*) Mrs. Davers, allow me to ask you one question, it is for information ; is *Balderdash* a proper expression ?

Mrs. D A V E R S.

I do not know, Miss ; I did not learn my language by rule, I may make use of improper expressions, but I give you only good precepts ; do not stop at words but attach yourself to things ; I would advise you to learn that custom.

HARRIOT, (*After a short silence affects to cough*).

What a terrible cough, I am almost choaked.—

LUCETTA, *laughing.*

Yes, with the desire of speaking.—Mrs. Davers, will you allow me to tell a story to the young ladies?

HARRIOT.

A story!—

(They all rise.)

Mrs. DAVERS.

Yes, you may tell it.

LUCETTA.

Well, but first look at this ring,

AGATHA.

How beautiful it is!—

LUCETTA.

It was brought to me two days ago, with a desire that I would persuade my lady to buy it.

EMILIA.

What is the price of it?

LUCETTA.

The person asks only five-and-twenty guineas, and it is worth fifty.

HARRIOT.

Well, has Mama bought it?

LUCETTA.

No indeed : the very low price made my lady suspect, either that the ring was stolen, or is the property of some person in great want of money ; and she charged me to make the strictest enquiry upon that head.

EMILIA.

Well, what have you discovered?—

LUCETTA.

That this ring belongs to a lady from the country, who is in great distress at this very moment ! she came here upon business and fell sick, and was scarce recovered from a malignant fever which lasted five weeks, when she found herself without money, pressed by her creditors, and in great trouble. She will not have recourse to any one, and in the mean time, while she waits for assistance which she expects to be sent to her from the country, she is obliged to sell this ring for—

present subsistence. This story occasioned my discovering likewise, that there is in the same inn, where this lady lodges, an old blind woman of whom she took care, whom she has been obliged to abandon, and who is in dreadful misery.

A G A T H A.

Does Mama know all this !

L U C E T T A.

No, not yet, but I shall acquaint her as soon as Madam Celia leaves her.

Mrs. D A V E R S.

I know very well what my lady will do.

L U C E T T A.

O yes, that is not difficult to guess.

E M I L I A.

The poor lady who has found herself obliged to forsake the unhappy blind woman; how I pity her.

Mrs. D A V E R S.

In short, that is one of the great motives

of compassion which distress must excite; the not being able to follow the emotions of humanity, which are so natural.

EMILIA.

Where does this poor blind woman lodge?

LUCETTA.

Hard by here. O I am sure my Lady will give her something.—

Mrs. DAVERS.

No matter; these young ladies must not be deprived of the pleasure of contributing to a good action.

HARRIOT.

I will give Lucetta what I intend for her, if she will take charge of it.

AGATHA.

And so will I.

Mrs. DAVERS.

And I too, Ladies; I will follow your example, and give likewise what I can afford;

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LUCETTA.

I will do the same, and with all my heart.
—but somebody comes.—Perhaps it is my
lady.

HARRIOT.

No, no, it is my cousin.

LUCETTA.

O, the Marchioness Aurora.—I go then.

AGATHA.

You don't think her agreeable, Lucetta!

LUCETTA.

No indeed Miss! quite the contrary.

(She goes out.)

Mrs. DAVERS,]

What can bring her here so early?

R iij

SCENE III.

Mrs. DAVERS, EMILIA, AGATHA,
HARRIOT, the MARCHIONESS.

(Mrs. Davers goes to sit down at the table to work.)

The MARCHIONESS.

O, here are my Cousins—Good day, my dear Emilia. *(To Agatha.)* Good day my heart. *(To Harriot.)* Good day little kitten. Your servant, Mrs. Davers ; are you not surprised to see me a-foot by ten o'clock—really it kills me.—Only guess at what o'clock I went to bed.—It was day, broad day, I have been only four hours in bed. How happens it that my Aunt is not with you. I must speak with her ; I absolutely must ; and I am told my uncle is not up yet.

EMILIA.

No, he went very late to bed last night.

The MARCHIONESS.

That is terribly provoking ; I am come here on a very important, very pressing business. I have infinite confidence in my uncle. Emilia, I love the dressing of your hair, it is simple, careless, but exceedingly graceful. Is all that hair your own ?

EMILIA.

I never wear false hair.

MARCHIONESS.

Nor I neither ; I hate art.—

HARRIOT.

O Cousin, you must scold your maid then.

MARCHIONESS.

That happens pretty often, but why would you have me scold her ?

HARRIOT.

Because she has dressed your hair so that

one would swear you had two false curls on each side.

MARCHIONESS.

However, they are my own hair.—But tell me what is your Mama doing?

AGATHA.

She is shut up with my Aunt.

MARCHIONESS.

With my mother.

AGATHA.

Yes.

MARCHIONESS.

That is surprising—it disconcerts me greatly; but do you think my mother will come here, with your's?

AGATHA.

I do not know.

MARCHIONESS.

I wish to be gone.—I don't know what to do.—I am afraid to meet her in going out.—

Well, I will wait a little longer.—Emilia, you was at the ball last night, and I am told your dress was charming, A propos, I beg you will send your mantua-maker to me; your dress did great execution, but it was thought you had not enough of rouge.—Have you any this morning?

EMILIA.

At this time a-day! You laugh at me.—

AGATHA.

Besides, she does not even put on any to go to a ball, her natural colour is so excellent.

MARCHIONESS.

No matter, at a ball it is wore by every one; to omit it would be to assume an air of consequence. For my part, I tell you what is said. I detest rouge too; I am told that I might do without, but I am so much afraid of being singular——

AGATHA.

You are married; the case is different.

MARCHIONESS.

Harriot, how goes the harpsicord?

HARRIOT.

Not too well Cousin; you must hear Agatha, and my sister Emilia on the harp.

MARCHIONESS.

God be thanked I was taught nothing, and when one must educate one's self, there is some merit in not being a simpleton.—I had a turn for music.—an incredible turn.—But to what purpose are all these things? I do not see that they make people succeed better in the world. Provided one is but handsome and has wit, that is sufficient to please.

Mrs. D A V E R S, *aside*.

The conversation is taking an improper turn. (*Aloud.*) Miss Harriot and Miss Agatha, will you come hither to me. I have your books in my work bag, and you can read till your Mama comes.

HARRIOT.

And my Sister,

Mrs. DAVERS.

She is far enough advanced to be company for the Marchioness; and besides I know Miss Emila too well, not to be certain that she can derive great advantage from such a conversation.

MARCHIONESS.

You greatly compliment my understanding, Mrs. Davers.

Mrs. DAVERS.

No more than it deserves, Madam.

HARRIOT, *laughing*.

No, no.——

MARCHIONESS.

What do you laugh at Harriot?

HARRIOT.

Ask my sisters, for I'll engage they are as well inclined to laugh as I.——

EMILIA.

How foolish !

Mrs. DAVERS.

Come, come, Ladies. *(They go and sit down to read.)*

MARCHIONESS.

How old are you Emilia ? Are not you in your nineteenth year ?

EMILIA.

I was seventeen the twelfth of this month,

MARCHIONESS.

Well, I am four years older.—I thought there was but three years difference between us.—My God, cousin, how glad I should be to see you married.—It is high time to think of it.—I was only sixteen when I married.

EMILIA.

That is quite natural; you was an excellent match, I have nothing.

MARCHIONESS.

Yes, indeed, two sisters and two brothers are a bar to marriage.—I am afraid, my dear, that you must determine to fix in the country; in Paris it would be impossible. However, one must act as appears most reasonable.—Besides, if you knew all the hazards to be met with in the fashionable world, you would comfort yourself with the thoughts that it is not probable you are destined to live in it.—When people are agreeable and handsome, they inspire sentiments, in spite of themselves, that are very troublesome.—They are beset, followed, and persecuted.—Then the jealousy of a husband, the envy of the women!—Ah, you will be very happy not to know these things.—A propos, was not Count Moncalde here yesterday at dinner?

EMILIA.

Yes, he was.—

MARCHIONESS.

I don't know how it is, but he has found the way to connect himself intimately with all

my relations—I meet him every where. How is it to be avoided?—Poor man—his brain seems hurt—but I pray you, Emilia, don't mention it.—He is amiable; besides, I have a very high opinion of him. His manner is admirable; it is very extraordinary that a foreigner, a Portuguese, should be so graceful.—He told me the other day that he looked upon France now as his native country.—I very well know his reason; it is a pity.—But my aunt don't come; I can't wait any longer for her; Cousin, you will tell her that I shall return. I must see her this day; I shall set out for Versailles after supper; my week begins to-morrow. How tiresome! I am distracted at the very thought of it.—

EMILIA.

I remember you solicited this appointment with great ardour; do you recollect all the steps you made Mama take about this affair?—

MARCHIONESS.

O, that was because I had no conception of the dreadful irksomeness of such a slavery.

EMILIA.

If you dislike the slavery, what prevents you from quitting it? I know that the people upon whom you depend, will agree to it readily.

MARCHIONESS.

The people on whom I depend!—You make use of very submissive expressions.—

EMILIA.

Don't you depend on a husband, a mother, a father-in-law?

MARCHIONESS.

At twenty-one, after being five years married!—From the moment we can walk alone, we only depend upon our inclinations. You think perhaps that I still have occasion for a *chaperon*.

EMILIA.

I believe indeed that a guide would not

be useless to you; I think that a woman never can withdraw from the authority of a husband; and ought at all times to follow, cherish, and respect the counsels of a mother.

MARCHIONESS.

Upon my word, a very sublime, moral lesson! it is true indeed it conveys no new ideas.

EMILIA.

No indeed, they are common maxims; they are too natural and too sacred not to be universally received.—

MARCHIONESS.

Truly you speak delightfully; however, I advise you, if you live in genteel life, to lay aside that little dogmatical manner, which some people may take the liberty to laugh at.

EMILIA.

I know the respect I owe to a married woman, and who is older than myself; and I did not think it was being deficient when I presumed to declare opinions which I am confident in the main are quite conformable to

your own. Besides, knowing you from my infancy, having the advantage of being related to you, I flattered myself that you would excuse a liberty which I would not take with another. In short, you may depend upon it, cousin, that if ever I live in the world, I shall be silent, attentive, and particularly careful never to run the risk of advancing opinions which can give an unfavourable idea of my disposition.

MARCHIONESS, *looking at her watch.*

My God, it is ten o'clock!—Adieu, I pray you, cousin, tell my aunt that I shall come back.—*(She draws near the table.)* Adieu, my little Harriot, what are you reading my dear?—*(She looks over her shoulder.)* *The history of France*; how tiresome!—And you, Agatha.—*The Roman History.*—*(She shrugs up her shoulders.)* Poor unhappy girls, how I pity you.—Emilia, you know all that by heart, don't you? I therefore congratulate you. For my part, I declare to you that I do not know in what year Rome was founded; that I

cannot draw an eye ; that I do not know a single note of music, and notwithstanding this profound ignorance, I am sufficiently successful and envied in society, to see the accomplishments and importance of others without envy.—But pursue your studies ; it is certainly right, if it amuses you. Adieu, I wish you a great deal of pleasure.—Do not disturb yourself, Mrs. Davers.—Adieu 'till evening.

(She goes out.)

SCENE IV.

Mrs. DAVERS, EMILIA, AGATHA,
HARRIOT:

HARRIOT.

Yes, yes, because she knows nothing, she laughs at instruction ; but, for my part, I think it is much easier to laugh at ignorance—then, when she says she is not envious, it is only to laugh that she pretends it : you need

only observe how she always returns to my sister Emilia.—Well, Mrs. Davers, it is very extraordinary, but there is nobody in the world makes me so desirous to learn as my cousin : O, I will not resemble her ; if it was only for that, I should immediately desire to be instructed.—

EMILIA.

O ! I hear Mama's voice.

AGATHA.

Yes, it is she and my aunt.

SCENE V.

Lady ORSAN, CELIA, EMILIA, AGATHA,
HARRIOT, Mrs. DAVERS.

Lady ORSAN.

*(Her daughters go and kiss her hand, she embraces
them.)*

My dear children, I cannot give you your lessons this morning, but go to my chamber, and you will find the maps lying ready for your lessons in geography; Emilia must take my place to-day, and teach my school. Agatha, have you played on the harpsicord?

AGATHA.

Yes, Mama.

HARRIOT.

I have learned my verses, and my history, I have had my lesson of thorough-bass, I have written two pages, and Mrs. Davers is very well pleased with me.

Lady O R S A N.

Go, my children, into my chamber: Mrs. Davers, take them with you.

H A R R I O T.

Farewell Mama; farewell Aunt.

C E L I A.

Embrace me, my dear Emilia.—What a sweet sensible look!—Charming girl.—

(Mrs. Davers goes out with her pupils.)

S C E N E VI.

Lady O R S A N, C E L I A.

Lady O R S A N.

She is indeed a charming girl.—That noble engaging figure, that sweet sensible countenance, happily expresses her mind and temper. Completely well informed and accomplished, adored by all who approach her, praised by all who know her, she is not the more vain;

she ascribes all her success to her education; she imagines that any one educated as she has been, would have derived the same benefit. The praises that are bestowed on her redouble her gratitude to me, it is to me only she thinks she owes them: she loves me the more, and is not proud of them. I do not know a more sound or solid understanding than her's; she has the most matchless sincerity, and at the same time perfect discretion; in short, to so many rare qualities, she adds an unchangeable sweetness of temper, and all the candour and amiable timidity of her age.

CELIA.

How happy you are, sister, and how different has been my fate.—But it is unjust to envy that happiness we have not merited. What bitterness does that reflexion add to our troubles.—I neglected the education of my daughter, and my daughter is the cause of my unhappiness. But let us talk only of your's, let us talk only of Emilia; she is almost as dear to me as she is to yourself.

Lady O R S A N.

Ah sister, allow me to tell you that no affection can be compared to that which I feel for her?—and perhaps I am upon the eve of being separated for ever from that object so passionately loved.—What you have declared to me this morning has not surprised me; I foresaw it, but I own the certainty oppresses me. However, do not be afraid of my weakness, it shall not be seen but by you. Alas! can we hesitate one instant to sacrifice every thing to the happiness of those we love?

C E L I A.

It was with the greatest reluctance I undertook to mention the proposal; I knew what a dreadful blow it would be to you; however, Emilia's want of fortune, and the splendid advantages of the alliance, determined me to speak to you.—Besides, you alone have a right to declare your refusal—

Lady O R S A N.

You may depend upon me, I will not abuse it.

CELIA.

Won't you go and acquaint my brother with the proposal?

Lady ORSAN.

I expect him, he will be here soon,—Alas, I prepare for him a salute of sorrow.

CELIA.

You have an absolute power over him, he will do nothing but what you advise.

Lady ORSAN.

His goodness indeed leaves me absolute mistress of my girls,—I hope, I shall justify so dear and flattering a confidence.

CELIA.

We are the authors of our own fate, and you are a proof of it: you was married under the most unpromising auspices, subdued by a fatal passion, he who gave you his hand refused his heart, and in distraction obeyed his imperious parents. You was no sooner married than he had the barbarity

to let you know his sentiments; any one in your place would have yielded to the emotions of a resentment but too well founded, but you listened only to your duty, and you have received your reward. That same man who treated you with scorn, very soon became sensible of his egregious error; he lamented it, he at first made atonement by esteem and attention, and afterwards by the most solid attachment and entire confidence.—But somebody comes, certainly it is he; I leave you, but will return by and by, to know the result of your conversation.

Lady O R S A N.

Why do you go so soon? —

C E L I A.

I have some business, I must speak with my daughter; she gives me great vexation! —She absolutely runs to ruin: I will tell you all in the evening. Farewell, Sister.—

Lady O R S A N.

If I have occasion for you, where are you to be found?

CELIA.

At home; I shan't stir out but to come here. Farewel dear Sister till the evening.
(*She goes out.*)

Lady ORSAN, *alone.*

Emilia!—my daughter—part from Emilia—and for ever—for ever—can I live without her!—What signifies my life, provided Emilia be happy!—Somebody comes—let me conceal my tears and weakness.

SCENE VII.

Lady ORSAN, Lord ORSAN, *in his Nightgown.*

Lady ORSAN.

I beg your pardon, my Lord, for having disturbed you so early, but I have some important business to communicate to you.

Lord ORSAN.

You alarm me.—You have been in tears, I see; what is the matter my dearest?—

Lady O R S A N.

I am a little disturbed, I own, however, I have nothing disagreeable to acquaint you with—but on the contrary.—

Lord O R S A N.

By this emotion, I guess it relates to Emilia.

Lady O R S A N.

It is so.—My sister has been here this morning to propose a marriage for her.

Lord O R S A N.

Well !

Lady O R S A N.

The person who solicits her hand, possesses all the advantages of birth and fortune, and his personal merit is universally acknowledged. He is thirty years of age, his figure is agreeable; he loves Emilia; he wants only herself, and even refuses the fortune which we meant for her.

Lord O R S A N.

Well, are you not transported with joy ?—

I burn with impatience to know his name.—

Lady ORSAN.

You know him; he comes here frequently,
and you like him much.—

Lord ORSAN.

Satisfy my impatience then.

Lady ORSAN.

It is Count Moncalde.—

Lord ORSAN.

Count Moncalde!—a foreigner—but surely
he proposes to settle in France!

Lady ORSAN.

Alas! he says he will enter into no kind
of engagement on that head; it is sufficiently
known his design of returning to his own
country.

Lord ORSAN.

And you will be tempted to give your
daughter to him?

Lady ORSAN.

I have known him these four years, I am

perfectly acquainted with his character; there is none more virtuous or more truly estimable; he is a man of spirit and possesses the most agreeable qualities; he has extensive knowledge, a feeling heart, and is without affectation; he is passionately fond of accomplishments: in short, he has all those qualities which can make my daughter happy, and shall I refuse her to him?—Ah, my dear friend, do you think I am selfish to such guilty excess?

Lord O R S A N *taking her by the hand.*

But can I consent to a sacrifice which will make you miserable?—Besides, can I myself resolve to give up Emilia; she is my daughter, and what is more, she is of your forming? I trace in her, your understanding, your virtues: no, no, do not expect that I can ever consent to part from her.—I have formed to myself such pleasing ideas of seeing her in the world, of enjoying her success; how happy I shall be in hearing the encomiums she must receive, since they will be due to your cares!—What, you will have

dedicated the best years of your life to her education, to see her cruelly torn from your arms and her country, and in one instant to lose the fruit of fifteen years toil and labour?

Lady O R S A N.

I have laboured for her happiness, not for her vanity. Think only of the smallness of her fortune, and of the unlooked-for and splendid advantages of the alliance which is offered us. A worthy amiable man, of the most distinguished birth, and possessed of an immense fortune.—It is true, I shall be separated from Emilia, but she will never forget me; that idea will comfort me; yes, while I am satisfied about the fate of my daughter, I can support every thing.

Lord O R S A N.

But is Emilia herself resolved to leave you?

Lady O R S A N.

Reason will do every thing with her. This effort will undoubtedly be a severe trial to her, and I am pleased with the thought; but if the person and disposition of Count Moncalde

is agreeable to her, I undertake to prevail with her to make that sacrifice, however painful it may be.—In short, I beg you will trust the care of her happiness to me.

Lord O R S A N.

Well, since you will have it so, I consent; it is you to be sure, my dearest, who should dispose of her; can I dispute a title which you have acquired by so much care and trouble? I foresee that you will sacrifice yourself for this much-loved object; I should not have your courage, but I admire it, and can no longer oppose you.—What regret are you preparing for yourself? And I, how shall I support your sorrows and my own, your tears, and being deprived of Emilia?

Lady O R S A N.

No, do not fear it; I shall not disturb your peace by unnecessary complaints: can I give myself up to my sorrows, when my greatest consolation must be the hope of alleviating your's?

Lord ORSAN.

Ah, you alone are every thing to me.— You know it—friendship, admiration and gratitude are the ties by which I am attached to you; the empire you have over me is so well justified by your worth, that far from disavowing it, it is my glory to proclaim it.—I owe every thing to you, my reason, my sentiments, my principles, and my happiness. I find in you a most amiable and indulgent friend, a most useful counsellor: be always then the arbiter of the fate of our children, as you have been of mine.—But let us at least try every means to induce Count Moncalde to settle in France.—He seemed so affected with your tenderness to Emilia! he testified so sincere an attachment to you!—How could he conceive a project to separate you from your daughter?—I cannot think he will be inflexible on that head.

Lady ORSAN.

No, no, let us not flatter ourselves, his temper

is steady and resolute ; he has positively declared to my sister, that it is needless to attempt to impose upon him the condition of his settling in France ; that he cannot consent to it. His resolution of returning to Portugal is irrevocable, you may depend upon it.

Lord O R S A N.

How you distress me !—But I repeat it to you, the fate of Emilia is in your own hands ; whatever I may suffer, I leave you absolute mistress, and shall not say one word against it. Will you mention it to her to day ?

Lady O R S A N.

Yes, after dinner—But it is late ; we must go and dress.—I have not seen my boys yet, let us go to them.

Lord O R S A N.

I want to consult you on something relating to them ; I am dissatisfied with their tutor, and have had another recommended, whom I wish you to see : I am told he speaks English perfectly.—I cannot judge.

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Lady

Lady ORSAN.

I will tell you if he really understands it perfectly.—

Lord ORSAN.

How so? you never learnt English.

Lady ORSAN.

I beg your pardon, I have been learning it these twelve months, that I might be able to teach it to Harriot, who has asked me for an English master. Masters in general teach so carelessly!—Two years of their lessons, are not equal to three months of those given by a mother.

Lord ORSAN.

What a woman you are!—So that till your children are settled in the world, you will pass a part of your own life with teachers; you dedicate one half of it to gain instruction, and the other to communicate it.—But what do I say, amidst so many cares and occupations, while you thus multiply your duties, you still have time to spare to

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friendship and society; how is this possible!——

Lady O R S A N.

We easily find time for duties so much loved.

Lord O R S A N.

You incessantly astonish, me I own.—If your children do not make you happy, what mother can hope from her's the comfort of her life.—And our dearest Emilia will be lost to you.—That idea is terrible.—I cannot stand it.—Are you to see your Sister again to day, and give her your answer to Count Moncalde?

Lady O R S A N.

He desires a speedy one, and I will give it, since I have your permission, as soon as I know the inclinations of Emilia.

Lord O R S A N.

Emilia will refuse this marriage, I am certain.—

T ij

Lady ORSAN.

I think as you do ; but is it not enough if her heart is not averse to Count Moncalde, and that she esteems him as he deserves?—

Lord ORSAN.

Well, I see I must consent to make this sacrifice.—Speak to your daughter, speak to her without me, for I cannot stand this conversation ; I shall marr your purpose, I am but too sensible of it—A propos, tell me, is your niece informed of this affair ?

Lady ORSAN.

She knows nothing of it.

Lord ORSAN.

She was here twice this morning to call on me before I was awake ; what can she want with me ?

Lady ORSAN.

Are not you her confidant ?

Lord ORSAN.

Yes, sometimes : she relates to me all the love

addressees that are made to her; tells me the names of all the people who are dying for love of her, and asks my advice: I tell her she is handsome, and if I was fifteen years younger I should go distracted for her; she is delighted with our conversation, and maintains to all the world that I am a man of spirit and understanding.

Lady O R S A N.

You would do much better in giving her some advice, of which she stands so much in need.——

Lord O R S A N.

If I was to talk reason to her she would not hear me. I am not obliged to her for her pretended confidence; I owe it all to her ridiculous vanity. Now we speak of her, I recollect, she desired I might be told she would come back again; I must go and give orders not to admit her, for I am no ways disposed to relish her conversation this day. —Come, will you go the children.

T iij

Lady ORSAN.

Most willingly.

Lord ORSAN.

Come, my dearest. (*He gives her his arm.*
They go out.)

End of the First Act.

A C T II.

S C E N E I.

HARRIOT, LUCETTA.

HARRIOT.

Well, Lucetta,—tell me the rest of the story of the ring; you have sent it back to the poor lady?

LUCETTA.

Yes, with fifteen guineas which my Lady lends her.

HARRIOT.

Fifteen guineas!—I am very glad of it.—
And the blind woman?

LUCETTA.

My Lady has given her six guineas.—

HARRIOT.

Well, I will likewise give her something.

I have two guineas, she shall have one
—I shall be like Mama, I shall love to give.

LUCETTA.

Yes, but my Lady never gives any thing
but what costs her the sacrifice of some superfluity. Nobody can be truly generous but
by doing so.

HARRIOT.

However, I like superfluities too.—There
is nothing else pretty. Here comes Mama.

SCENE II.

Lady ORSAN, EMILIA, AGATHA,
HARRIOT, LUCETTA.

HARRIOT.

Mama, Mama, I pray you give me leave
to send a guinea to the poor blind woman.

Lady ORSAN.

Most willingly, your sisters have asked

the same permission; Emilia gives three guineas, and Agatha two; but I tell you beforehand, that each of us in giving, has made a sacrifice. I have made a sacrifice of a picture, Emilia of a port-folio, and Agatha of a hat; I hope, Harriot, you have the same reason,

H A R R I O T.

But, Mama, I have no sacrifice to make, I do not want any thing.

Lady O R S A N.

I think you proposed yesterday to buy a pretty desk, we saw at the cabinet maker's.—

H A R R I O T.

That is true indeed.—But I shall have a guinea left; the desk is only six and thirty shillings; Emilia will lend me fifteen shillings, and I can buy it.

Lady O R S A N.

What, have recourse to borrowing for a trifle which you can easily do without! Besides, you must never run in debt, but when

it is absolutely necessary. If you have not a good heart, I cannot give it you, but it is possible for me to teach you to reason justly. If in doing a good action, we retrench nothing from our common expence, we only commit a folly ; if we borrow from one hand to give to another, we disorder our finances, and usurp the appellation of benevolent, for there is no virtue without reason. Act consistently, which is all that I have any right to expect from you ; buy the desk, or help the poor woman ; but never expect to unite the pleasure of gratifying all your whims, with the happiness of being useful to the unfortunate ; that is impossible.

HARRIOT.

Since I must choose, surely I shall not hesitate ; I give up the desk with all my heart.

Lady ORSAN.

In that case you have merit in what you do, since it will exercise your self-denial. Without that, where would be the merit ?

H A R R I O T.

My dear Mama, I am sensible of that, and every time I regret the want of the desk, I will think of the blind woman, and I shall regret it no longer.

Lady O R S A N.

And you may even say, "If I had not been
" compassionate, I should have had a desk
" which now I do not care for; instead of
" which, the remembrance of a good action
" remains to me, an honest poor woman
" blesses me, and Mama loves me the
" better."—(*She embraces her.*)

H A R R I O T.

O Mama, from this instant I think no longer of the desk, I assure you; and I see that what I at first thought a sacrifice, is not one, but the contrary,

Lady O R S A N.

It is so of all those which virtue requires; they are only difficult before the execution; in proposing them, we only consider what

they may cost; but in doing them, the pride alone which they inspire is a sufficient recompence. I hope, my dear Harriot, you will know a still more pleasing value, that which a feeling mind can give. But go with Agatha, return to your governess. Emilia, do you stay.

EMILIA.

Somebody is coming.

AGATHA.

It is my cousin.

Lady ORSAN, *aside*.

How troublesome! — (*aloud*.) Go, my children, and when my niece leaves me, you Emilia, return.—Go, my girl.—(*They all go out.*)

SCENE III.

Lady ORSAN, the MARCHIONESS.

Lady ORSAN, *aside*.

What has she to say to me. How disagreeable this visit in my present situation!

MARCHIONESS.

Ah dear aunt, have I found you at last.—
I have great need of your friendship and advice.

Lady ORSAN.

My advice!—you astonish me; I did not think it ever could be of any use to you; you have despised it so long: but it is no matter, say, what is it? if it is possible for me to be of any use to you, you may depend upon me.

MARCHIONESS.

It is true aunt, that I have behaved amiss to you, I am giddy and inconsiderate, but

you are so good, and my repentance so sincere, I am inclined to place an entire confidence in you.

Lady ORSAN.

Upon what subject.

MARCHIONESS.

I am in a cruel situation.—I will conceal nothing from you; I shall not endeavour to lessen my faults; besides I detest artifice. My greatest fault is, I cannot restrain myself, whatever I feel, is expressed in my countenance, in spite of me.—

Lady ORSAN.

Let us come to the point I pray you.—

MARCHIONESS.

Dear aunt, you see me quite distracted; my relations persecute me in such a manner as never was seen; my sisters-in-law detest me, and have ruined me in the opinion of my father-in-law.—

Lady O R S A N.

And from whence proceeds this aversion of your sisters-in-law?

M A R C H I O N E S S.

From an odious jealousy, dear aunt, of which I am the victim. They are excessively envious, and the little success I have had in the world, has made them my declared, irreconcilable enemies.

Lady O R S A N.

You have no reason to expect that—for really I do not see why your sisters-in-law should envy you; they are young, amiable, and handsome; the Viscountess especially is charming.

M A R C H I O N E S S.

Yes, charming indeed!—If you saw her by day, her complexion is frightful; and her shape is not straight.

Lady O R S A N.

What is that you say?—She is exceeding handsome,—

MARCHIONESS.

Yes, with her padded stays; but in fact she is crooked.—Besides, she has so little understanding, and takes so much upon her—and such malice.—I should like her sister better, she is less disagreeable.—

Lady ORSAN.

Are these the secrets with which you was desirous to trust me.

MARCHIONESS.

But aunt, I must speak to you of people who are the cause of my unhappiness.

Lady ORSAN.

I advise you to employ every means in your power to be reconciled to them; your father-in-law and husband love them tenderly, and—

MARCHIONESS.

They have had the wickedness to set me at variance with both of them.

Lady O R S A N.

What, your husband likewise against you?

M A R C H I O N E S S.

He is the torment of my life, his jealousy becomes more and more insupportable every day; my patience is worn out.

Lady O R S A N.

You now make a confession which is a proof of very great confidence: for it is cruel and excessively humiliating to be obliged to allow that a husband is jealous.

M A R C H I O N E S S.

It is cruel no doubt, but I see nothing humiliating in it: he is jealous because he is so foolish as to be in love with me.—

Lady O R S A N.

And the injustice not to esteem you.

M A R C H I O N E S S.

O, he esteems me in the main; I am not uneasy on that head.

Lady ORSAN.

I easily believe it. But if he is so jealous as you say, he does himself a very praiseworthy violence, for he does not constrain you, but leaves you at full liberty.

MARCHIONESS.

That is, that he may not appear jealous in the eyes of the world.

Lady ORSAN.

You assist him greatly to conceal that weakness; and you seem not at all uneasy about the pain it may give him. Nobody gives herself up to dissipation more than you, or lives less with her family.

MARCHIONESS.

It is because I am tormented there.

Lady ORSAN,

These are your complaints. Now I will tell you what are those of your relations against you. Your father-in-law alledges that you only shew a cold disdainful politeness to

his friends; that you make game of his circle; that you find fault with all who are not of your own set, as awkward and insipid. That you shew no civility but to those women who are in the height of the fashion; provided they are not too much distinguished by their wit and figure; that those, who from want of fortune or from choice, are not dressed with elegance, and in the extremity of the mode, are the objects of your contempt; that trifling and assumed airs have the sole title to please and engage you: in short, that you are such a coquet as to disgust reasonable people, and think all the glory of a woman consists in running into idle expence, to employ the milliner most in vogue, and to be constantly followed every where by three or four giddy young men, who make it their business to proclaim it. They likewise say, one of your follies is, that of easily persuading yourself that people are in love with you; and frequently take the slightest marks of attention for the effect of a secret passion. These are the things with which you are re-

proached ; and I am willing to believe there is great exaggeration in such weighty accusations : but indeed niece, it is too much to have given room for them by your levity. Open your eyes I conjure you, it is still time ; you are very young, the faults of your age are excusable, and may be repaired.

MARCHIONESS.

In these accusations, dictated by hatred and malice, I can plainly trace my sisters-in-law. I confess that I am giddy, but I abhor coquetry ; and far from being apt to imagine that people are in love with me ; I must have the most positive proofs to convince me.—

Lady ORSAN.

But, niece, there is always some fault in a woman when a man dares to let his sentiments be perceived ; think that it is not always the handsomest, but the most giddy that attracts their notice.—

MARCHIONESS.

However, aunt, when one is beset and followed every where; when, by a very pointed disdain, a visible disgust, one testifies indifference, even anger, and after all this to be only the more persecuted, what can one do?

Lady ORSAN.

I do not know of whom you speak; but I assure you, that without disdain, disgust, or anger, it is very easy to get rid of such a pursuit; there is nothing wanted but a sincere desire.

MARCHIONESS.

Ah, aunt, if you knew what I suffer on this head.—There are some unconquerable passions.—For these two years, I have been, in spite of me, the object of a whim which harrasses me excessively.—In other respects he is a valuable man, but he has taken this wretched folly in his head, which makes him truly to be pitied. It is much talked of, I

know, and it distresses me greatly—Only think, he is intimately connected with all my relations, my father-in-law, my mother, and even with you, aunt.—The like was never heard.—I meet him wherever I go, so that he seems to follow me like my shadow.—

Lady ORSAN.

Will you let me hear his name?

MARCHIONESS.

It is Count Moncalde.

Lady ORSAN.

Count Moncalde! And you think he is in love with you?

MARCHIONESS.

So extravagantly that it exceeds all expression.—

Lady ORSAN.

I imagine he has not told you so.

MARCHIONESS.

I keep him at too great a distance for him to presume to make such a declaration; but

his conduct speaks it plain enough. This folly really grieves me, for he is agreeable, and engaging; I could not think that with his spirit and good sense, he would give himself up to so ridiculous a passion, and the more so, that I certainly have spared no pains to cure him.

Lady O R S A N.

Well, neice, be of comfort, I can assure you that he has not *a passion* for you.

M A R C H I O N E S S.

Ah, I wish it was so! But, aunt.—

Lady O R S A N.

I am sure of it, and to relieve you from all doubts upon that head, I will own to you that I know his secret. In fact, he is in love, I know the object of his passion, and it is not you.

M A R C H I O N E S S.

You delight me, dear aunt; this discovery charms me.—In short, resentment must have restored him to himself.

Lady ORSAN.

No truly; since he has been in France, he has never had any other passion than this of which I now speak; for these three years it has entirely engaged him.

MARCHIONESS, *with a forced laugh.*

As for *entirely*, I can deny that.—

Lady ORSAN.

You may believe me; you know I never exaggerate: I am certain of the sincerity of his affections, they are equally tender and solid.

MARCHIONESS.

One thing certain is, that his conduct with me has been very strange.—I shall never forgive the mortal vexation his assiduities occasioned me. He is naturally a little tiresome, and with that, it must be allowed he is a most terrible pedant.—People say, that he is very false—and indeed I may very well accuse him of falsehood.—This adventure is truly comical—it diverts me greatly.—

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And—may I presume, aunt, to ask if you know the object of his three years passion.

Lady O R S A N.

Yes, it is a person worthy of such a passion.

M A R C H I O N E S S.

And does this *accomplished* person love Count Moncalde?

Lady O R S A N.

I do not know.

M A R C H I O N E S S.

He has a turn for unhappy passion.—I am afraid the history of his amours would not make a very lively novel—and my aunt confidant of the intrigue!—nothing is wanting.—Excuse my pleasantry, dear aunt, it is my foible to be fond of raillery—and I cannot let slip so good an opportunity of laughing.—It is really too comical—too comical indeed—*(she laughs affectedly.)*

Lady O R S A N.

I am charmed to see such unaffected gaiety;

but as you have nothing farther to say to me, I must beg leave to go.

MARCHIONESS.

Adieu, dear aunt, excuse my intrusion and folly, but when the laughing humour seizes me, it is impossible for me to restrain it.—But however, I go away quite penetrated with what you have said to me; I shall not forget your counsels. I protest to you, aunt, they are deeply impressed on my mind.—

Lady ORSAN.

Farewell niece; if you are sincerely inclined to be reconciled to your relations, I make you an offer of my mediation.—They would wish you to go and spend six months with them in Languedoc; such complaisance would reconcile them to you, I am certain. If you consent, you will give me an undoubted proof of your respect and friendship. Upon that condition, I will see your father-in-law and husband, I will speak to them, and I engage to reunite you.

MARCHIONESS.

You are too good, dear aunt ; I will think of it, I will reflect seriously I promise you.—
 Adieu, my dear aunt—(*Aside as she goes out.*)
 What a tiresome creature is a woman of merit !
 (*She goes out.*)

S C E N E IV.

Lady O R S A N, *alone.*

What a sad head ! goodness of heart will not correct it.—There is no resource. How I pity my sister for having such a daughter !
 Alas ! in another way, shall I be a more happy mother ? On the eve of losing Emilia.
 —Ah, can I complain of my destiny ; whatever may be the vicissitudes of life, the virtues of our children ought to be our glory and happiness.—I hear Emilia.—I tremble.
 —What a conversation ; how it will rend my heart !

SCENE V.

Lady ORSAN, EMILIA.

EMILIA.

My cousin is gone at last—I have waited for this moment with impatience; Mama, you desired to speak with me; ever since morning I have observed you have a melancholy thoughtful look, which alarms me.—Mama, will you deign to open your heart to me?—you don't answer me.—O heavens! what has happened.—(*She takes hold of her hand.*) You sigh—you turn away your eyes.—Mama you terrify me.—

Lady ORSAN.

My child,—my dear Emilia, don't be alarmed.—

EMILIA.

Not alarmed!—and see you in tears.—

Lady ORSAN, *aside*.

Ah, what shall I say to her—Where shall I begin. (*Aloud.*) You know me my child; you

know how easily I am affected.—I have never concealed the weaknesſes of my heart from you, with you I cannot conſtrain myſelf; I cannot conceal from you an exceſs of ſenſibility which is frequently unreaſonable.

E M I L I A.

No, I never ſaw you in the ſtate you are in at preſent.—Ah, Mama, you alarm me greatly—

Lady O R S A N.

My dear, be calm I pray you.—It is true. I am agitated.—but the cauſe of my agitation is not diſagreeable, on the contrary—it ſhould inſpire me with joy—and it does.—

E M I L I A.

With joy!—and ſorrow painted on your countenance.—You conſtrain yourſelf—you want to prepare me for ſome miſfortune—ſome dreadful miſfortune undoubtedly.—It relates to me I ſee plainly. Mama, Mama, I can ſuffer every thing but being parted from you.—Your tears flow faſter.—Good

heaven! I have guessed it.—Ah! you will kill me.—

Lady ORSAN.

Well, then, that is the dreadful secret!—

EMILIA.

What do I hear! will my mother abandon me! can I believe it?

Lady ORSAN.

Good God, what is it you say.—O my girl; you dependant upon me! Know you not that it belongs to yourself to choose your destiny?

EMILIA.

I recover—Ah, Mama, what a wound you gave me.—But why then yield to this deep melancholy?

Lady ORSAN.

Alas! I grieve for the counsels which reason and affection oblige me give you.

EMILIA.

Is that leaving me my own mistress? your counsels, Mama, are they not sacred laws for

me?—What; will the best of mothers oblige her unhappy daughter to leave her? —No, no, it is not possible that you can require a sacrifice which would cost me my life—yes, my life, Mama, you may depend upon it.

Lady O R S A N.

What I require, my dear Emilia is, that you will listen to me, and answer without evasion to the questions I am going to ask you.

E M I L I A.

Can I answer you otherwise?

Lady O R S A N.

Who is the man that seems to you the most amiable, and whom you esteem the most of all that visit here?

E M I L I A.

Mama—but—O heaven—what do I perceive—he will marry me, and carry me to Portugal.—No, no, never.—

Lady O R S A N.

This ingenuous answer is sufficient.—

EMILIA.

What have I said—Ah, Mama, no, he is not the one whom I esteem the most, I spoke without reflexion.—Can a word spoken at random fix the destiny of my life !—No Mama, you are too just—

Lady ORSAN.

Your heart declared itself, my girl.

EMILIA.

My heart !—Ah, it is filled with natural affection, and that is sufficient.

Lady ORSAN.

Come, I know your heart better than you do yourself.—Do not disavow any of its emotions, they are all worthy of you. It is your sense and understanding, my child, which made you prefer Count Moncalde to all the rest. He deserves to be distinguished, Emilia, by his virtues and his character. In short, he loves you, he asks your hand.—

EMILIA.

And will he not fix in France?

Lady O R S A N.

Alas !

E M I L I A.

Ah ! if he loves me will he separate us ?—
Cruel man ! dare he conceive such an idea !
—wrest me from you !—tear me from my
mother !—But why should I be alarmed ?—
You condescend to leave me my own
mistress ; I refuse his offers ; let us talk no
more of it, Mama, I conjure you.

Lady O R S A N.

You promised to hear me.

E M I L I A.

Ah ! what are you going to say ?

Lady O R S A N.

Emilia, you know your situation ; I have
frequently mentioned it to you.—

E M I L I A.

Yes, I have no fortune, I know it ; well,
what signifies that, I shall never marry ; I
will not leave you ; all the wishes of my heart
will be gratified.

Lady ORSAN.

My dear Emilia, what vexation you give me; I see with pleasure the consequence of your affection for me, though I disapprove the excess; reason ought to regulate all our sentiments; without it, however lawful they may be in themselves, they become blameable, and only serve to lead us astray. What, my girl, shall all my instructions and cares have only served to inspire you with an attachment injurious to your fortune; is that all the advantage I am entitled to reap? Alas, how I am mistaken.—I thought that all the sacrifices I could resolve to make would never be above the powers of Emilia; I flattered myself that her courage was equal to mine, I was proud of her understanding.

EMILIA.

Who can be compared with you?—No, no, I must never pretend to it.—You can resolve to quit your daughter; but I cannot think *without trembling*, of living at a distance

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from my mother.—I have not your courage, excuse me, if I presume to say, I do not wish to have it.—Yes, of all your virtues, Mama, it is the only one of which I do not envy you—it is too cruel.—

Lady O R S A N.

Is it Emilia who accuses me of cruelty ?
—To what severe trial do you reduce my heart !

E M I L I A.

Ah, pardon me.—I am to blame.—Pardon me, Mama. }

Lady O R S A N.

With a little reflexion I am sure my girl you will be more just. If you had not a particular liking for Count Moncalde, if he was not worthy to inspire it, if I was not certain that he has all those qualities which can make the happiness of a virtuous wife ; notwithstanding his rank, his fortune, and his agreeable figure, I would not insist upon it. But you have nothing, you will find a most splendid and advantageous settlement ;

the husband who offers you his hand, is young, amiable, and virtuous; he is agreeable to you, he loves you; how can I fail to demand a sacrifice from you which so many reasons must dictate to us.—

EMILIA.

To demand!—Good God! What, would you demand that dreadful sacrifice?—And did you not deign to assure me you would leave me mistress of my fate? Mama, my dear Mama, have pity on me.—I am weak and unreasonable, alas! I own it; do not judge me by yourself; do not pronounce a cruel sentence which would drive me to despair.—Do not ask my consent.—No, I cannot give it.—Who I, I leave you, I see myself tyrannically torn from my family!—from you, my father, my sisters, my brothers, those beloved objects, to be separated from them for ever. —Ah, heaven! —

Lady ORSAN.

Emilia, if you knew the injury you do me,

I am sure you would recall that reason which you contemn, and which forsakes you. So that all I can obtain from you is the confession of an insurmountable weakness—Well then, since reason only seems a tyranny to you, let us talk no more of it; be your own mistress; my intreaties hurt you, my counsels cannot persuade you; it is all over, I renounce all title to guide you.—

EMILIA.

What do you say, Mama, you pierce me to the heart.—Ah, deign to forgive such a guilty error, dispose of me, command me.—However rigorous your desires may appear to me, ought I not to submit with a blind confidence; don't I know that you have nothing in view but my interest?—Yes, I resign myself; yes, Mama—upon this beloved hand bedewed with my tears, I abjure all criminal resistance.—Let repentance expiate my fault.—

Lady ORSAN.

My child!—see how my tears flow; let me have the comfort of mixing them with your's.—Why should I be afraid to shew you my weakness, you will not abuse it. Read then in my heart.—You suffer, you lament; I am no less to be pitied; this sacrifice is dreadful—but reason commands it—let my example teach you to hearken only to it.—We shall not see each other more, but secure of living always in your remembrance, I shall be able to support your absence.—Absence may separate us, but cannot disunite us: is not that a comforting idea?—We shall have done our duty; I, that of an affectionate mother, and you, that of a dutiful daughter; we shall be secure against repentance, the greatest and most insupportable of all evils. Your virtues, my dear Emilia, will make the happiness of your new family. Where we are loved we are no longer strangers; wherever you live you will find your country, I shall hear of your happiness, and enjoy it with transport. A

constant correspondence shall make amends for a fatal separation ; the employment of writing continually will alleviate our grief : in short, my child, you may depend upon it, that in spite of fate and absence, two hearts united by warm affection, will always find the secret of being happy. While the affection is mutual, is our situation to be regretted ?

E M I L I A.

What a cruel torment to be deprived of seeing those we love !—What will become of me in losing my guide ; a guide such as you ? —With what an eye can I look upon the author of my distress—he who will have the barbarity to tear me from you ?—I esteemed him, it is true, I believed that he loved you so much !—

Lady O R S A N.

He himself laments that it is not in his power to remain in this country, but the situation of his affairs obliges him to return to his own.

E M I L I A.

And my father !—Undoubtedly ; Mama, you are sure of his consent.—

Lady ORSAN.

He loves you too well to hesitate.—

EMILIA.

All forsake me!—no hope remains I see.—

At least my friends will deign to grant me time; this is my last intreaty, will that be rejected?

Lady ORSAN.

I must leave you to your reflexions, my girl; I too have need of a little solitude.—

I must likewise go very soon to find your father—that I may give him an account of this conversation.—He will see that I was not mistaken in my opinion of the good sense of his Emilia.

EMILIA.

Ah, do not make a boast to him of my sense, you will deceive him.—Tell him, Mama, that his unhappy girl—will obey—if that effort is possible, she will make it—but however she dares not promise it.—In short, that I will submit if it must be so—but that

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upon my knees I beg a delay, a long delay, to
prepare myself.

Lady O R S A N.

Adieu, my girl —

E M I L I A,

Adieu, did you say?—What a word!
Ah, let me follow you.—Let me see my
father.

Lady O R S A N.

Emilia, do you already repent of your
obedience, and that affecting submission you
shewed but just now?—you kill me my girl.
—I am exhausted; so many struggles are too
much for one day.

E M I L I A.

—Alas!—I no longer know myself.—Go,
Mama, and I will remain.—But time, time,
let me have time.

Lady O R S A N, *aside*.

I must prevent an inevitable relapse, and
complete my cruel work. (*She goes out.*)

SCENE VI.

EMILIA, *alone.*

(She sinks oppressed upon a chair, and after a short silence says,)

I am undone!—Have I promised?—Is it true?—O mother have you not taken advantage of your power over me?—I twice observed her look with severity.—She will have it so, she commands this dreadful sacrifice!—*(She rises and looks round her.)*—What? shall I quit this dear house!—What do I say! I must quit France—and never more to return.—And could I subscribe to this cruel decree!—My father has given his consent.—Alas! how easily are they determined to banish me for ever.—O mother, you demand it, I will obey: but how can you command me to live at a distance from you?—She talked to me of happiness! There is no longer any for me. Can I be happy

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without her ?—And my sisters, my brothers, my governess !—Agatha, poor Agatha, next to my mother, my most affectionate friend, what will become of her, when she hears this dreadful news ?—What a multitude of troubles at once ! My father, my mother, may find comfort amidst their family—but for me, I lose all.—The sacrifice is not an entire one but for me.—Somebody comes—O heaven, it is Agatha.

S C E N E VII.

EMILIA, AGATHA.

AGATHA.

I was looking for you sister.—O God ! what do I see, in what a state you are !—Ah, my dear Emilia.

EMILIA.

Have you seen Mama ?

AGATHA.

No, she is just gone out ; she is gone to my aunt's.

EMILIA.—

And my father?—

AGATHA.

He is shut up in his closet. But Emilia, there is certainly a proposal of marriage for you, I guess it by the distress in which I see you.

EMILIA.

Ah, sister! you will never guess the name of the person for whom I am destined.—

Agatha, my dear Agatha, if you love me as I love you, how much you will be to be pitied!—

AGATHA.

Good heaven!—Explain yourself.—

EMILIA.

I am commanded to marry Count Moncalde? he will carry me to Portugal.

AGATHA.

Gracious God!—will you obey?—will you leave us; can my mother consent to it?—Is it possible?

EMILIA.

It is but too true, my dear Agatha.

AGATHA.

No, I cannot believe it.—No, you must not obey.—

EMILIA.

What say you?—Can I resist my mother?—

AGATHA:

She part from you!—She determined to do it!—

EMILIA.

She sees nothing in it, but what she calls my interest; she forgets herself; alas, she likewise forgets that it is impossible for me to taste any happiness when absent from her.

AGATHA.

Ah, sister, do not consent.—

EMILIA.

My word is given.—

AGATHA.

Retract it I pray you, if it was but from tenderness to my mother ; your fatal obedience would prepare eternal regret for her.

EMILIA.

Agatha, you do not know the courage of my mother : guided by a superior understanding, her sensibility may make her suffer ; but will never produce in her one moment's weakness.—She repent of doing her duty ! no, no, she is incapable of it.—

AGATHA.

Emilia—sister, if you go, I shall not outlive the dreadful misfortune.—

EMILIA.

If you love me, Agatha, conceal from me that excessive sorrow which is but too likely to weaken me still more.—Do not persist in rending a heart already divided between duty, reason, and affection.

AGATHA.

Do not expect that I shall confirm you in that cruel duty.—I can only grieve myself, and run distracted!——

EMILIA.

I hear Lucetta.—Let us dry up our tears dear Agatha.

SCENE VIII.

EMILIA, AGATHA, LUCETTA.

LUCETTA to *Emilia*.

Ah, Miss what do I hear?

EMILIA.

What is it?

LUCETTA.

My lady is this instant returned with Madam Celia, and Count Moncalde.

EMILIA.

How!—

LUCETTA.

Your marriage is declared.—

EMILIA.

O heaven! already.

AGATHA.

Ah, sister!—

LUCETTA.

My Lord waited for my Lady in his closet; his valet de chambre Bernard was present.— When my Lady arrived she was in tears; Count Moncalde rushed into my Lord's arms.— Then Bernard was dismissed, but he heard my Lady pronounce your name twice.—

EMILIA.

It is done then!—and so speedily!—in spite of my intreaties.—Ah! mother!—She was in tears you say?

LUCETTA.

Bernard says she sobbed, ready to break her heart.

A G A T H A.

O my dear Emilia, come and throw yourself at my father's feet; come and implore his pity.—

E M I L I A.

Follow me, Sister, do not forsake me, I will venture to try every thing.—Yes, I shall have strength to overcome my natural timidity; if it is requisite, I shall summon up spirit to speak to Count Moncalde himself—I can do every thing, in short, except obey—Come—(*They go out quickly.*)

L U C E T T A, *alone.*

Certainly she will be carried to Portugal.—O heaven, what regret for the whole family—It will kill my Lady—And the poor Governess—if she is informed, in what a situation must she be—I will go and find her, and at least weep with her at liberty. (*She goes out.*)

End of the Second Act.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

LADY ORSAN, MRS. DAVERS.

LADY ORSAN.

Yes, my dear Mrs. Davers, every thing is settled, Emilia herself is submissive and resigned——Count Moncalde will be back in an hour, all my relations are informed, the Lawyer is sent for, the Articles will be signed this evening.—My sacrifice is completed——

MRS. DAVERS.

Ah, madam, what a sacrifice!——But, my God, why in such a violent hurry?

LADY ORSAN.

What can I gain by deferring it?—Can I have a more perfect knowledge of the character

of the man whom I have chosen?—I have known him four years, and have studied him these eighteen months, for I discovered his passion for Emilia before to-day.—And you may believe that it is more than one day since I have been able to see into the heart of my daughter; that pure and innocent heart which knows not itself.—

MRS. DAVERS.

You believe, Madam, that she loves Count Moncalde?

LADY ORSAN.

Of all the men she knows, he is the one whom she thinks the most amiable, and who appears to her the most deserving of esteem. Too virtuous, and too reasonable to give herself up to romantic ideas, I am sure that far from exaggerating the affection she has for him, the instinct of her natural modesty alone, prevents her from dwelling on or giving way to the subject. What is called Love, that violent impetuous passion, is nothing

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but an error of the imagination. It is from a lively and disordered brain, and not from a tender heart, that it derives its greatest force: fatal emotion, the cause of which is shameful, and the effects criminal; it is only powerful from our weakness; it frequently leaves dreadful remorse after it, and always bitter regret for the loss of a frail illusion which time and reason must inevitably destroy *. A conformity of understanding and taste, a true and solid esteem, are the only ties which can form a lasting attachment: these are the pure and durable sentiments which suit the mind of Emilia; she never will know any other, I am certain——

* What is said here is only meant of that passion which is alledged to be *invincible*, and of which the imaginary dangerous description given in Romances, has unhappily been read by numbers of young people; that passion which subdues the reason, and destroys every sense of duty: It is not to sensibility alone that such effects must be ascribed, but to the imagination, and a want of reflection and good principles. One blushes at the true causes, and endeavours to disguise them; thus it is that the heart is frequently accused of misconduct, which is the produce of a lively fancy and confused brain.

MRS. DAVERS.

She will inherit your understanding and all your good qualities ; ah, Madam, why must she be taken from us !——Pardon those tears which I cannot restrain——The articles will be signed this evening——Poor child, she hoped for a delay ; her heart is greatly oppressed, I am certain——

LADY ORSAN.

Mine is no less so !——If it could be seen into, my courage might be thought of some value——I myself hurried on the signing of the articles, because I was afraid of the weakness and irresolution of my daughter.

MRS. DAVERS.

And my Lord may be prevailed upon, and retract his promise ; I am sensible of that——But this evening——that is very speedy !——

LADY ORSAN.

Now, Mrs. Davers, I have but one wish ; it is, that your affection for my daughter may be strong enough to incline you to accompany her to Portugal.

MRS. DAVERS.

Ah, Madam, there is nothing I would not do for her——But I have served you these fifteen years; my attachment to you——

LADY ORSAN.

And can you give me a stronger proof of it, than by following my daughter?

MRS. DAVERS.

But, Madam, I presume to think I am useful to you; you have other children——

LADY ORSAN.

I know that I cannot hope to have one that can indemnify me for the loss of you, therefore I will trust to nobody but myself; I shall employ more attention than ever upon my children.

MRS. DAVERS.

In short, Madam, I shall obey your commands——Please to decide——If I must determine, where can I stop, since I cannot make a choice without making a sacrifice?——I shall always hesitate between you, Madam,

and that dear child, who only quitted your arms to pass into mine; you was her nurse, and I had the weaning of her; you are her mother; but is not a Governess, who has become attached to her, a second mother? Pardon this expression, Madam; is it improper from one, who has all the affection of a mother for her?—I shall be much to be pitied, however, in leaving you—Ah, Madam, what a marriage!—what a dreadful day!

L A D Y O R S A N.

Thou good and worthy woman!—You penetrate my heart with tenderness—You do not love one who is ungrateful; I know how much I am indebted to you; by the manner with which you have seconded my cares, you have well deserved the title of the mother of my children—I know what the sacrifice I require must cost you; to leave my house, is to leave your friends and your family; but you will follow our Emilia, our child; you will contribute greatly to comfort her; you will give her advice; you will talk

to her of her mother: it will be a pleasure to me to think that you will every day pronounce my name to her!—You will write to me the particulars of every thing that relates to her; in short, you will procure me the satisfaction of receiving by every courier a letter extraordinary, which will tell me of my Emilia: see then what I shall owe to you, and all that you will add to my gratitude.

MRS. DAVERS, *kissing her hand.*

O, Madam, what is it I would not do for you?—Take my word for it; yes, Madam, I will go, you may depend upon it.

LADY ORSAN.

Come to my arms, my dear friend—You have given me the first comfort I have received this day; that idea alone I am sure will be a sufficient recompence to you—I hear a noise—perhaps it is my girls—Let us hide our tender emotions from every eye; and let us set an example of courage. When all are gone to bed, you will come in the evening; we will talk and weep without constraint.

MRS. DAVERS.

Ah, Madam——this evening, you desire to speak with me——do you imagine our departure will be speedy.

LADY ORSAN.

Alas ! by the hasty proceedings of Count Moncalde, I have reason to believe that some pressing affairs require his presence in Portugal, and in that doubt, I would not lose a moment to give you, as well as my daughter, all the instructions I think necessary——But hush, they come.

MRS. DAVERS.

I must leave you, Madam, for at present I am not in a state, either to speak or to shew myself. (*She goes out.*)

LADY ORSAN.

This day, after all, is cruel and painful !

SCENE II.

LADY ORSAN, AGATHA.

LADY ORSAN.

Come, Agatha; I want to speak with you——

AGATHA.

Mama?——

LADY ORSAN.

I must find fault with you, my dear, for shewing such excessive sorrow.

AGATHA.

Ah, Mama, you know how I love my sister.

LADY ORSAN.

Do you think my affection for her is less than yours? —— However, I can constrain myself; I can conceal those tears from her, which would rend her heart, and disturb her

reason —— I give her advice, which pierces me to the soul ; I seem to condemn a despair in her, which I myself partake, and which my affection enjoys in secret. — From whence comes it that I have such power, such government of myself ? from one cause only ; it is, that I am not selfish ; it is because I look only for the good of Emilia ; I love her only for her own sake. I was not born with superior courage, my dear ; but I have sensibility, I can love. Sincere friendship improves our virtues, and gives us new ones ; and what is more, it corrects in us all those faults which can injure the objects that are dear to us.

A G A T H A.

Ah, Mama ! be so good as to excuse the effect of a first emotion ; I am sensible of the extent of my fault, I will repair it, you may depend upon it——My weakness will add to your troubles ; that idea alone is sufficient to make me overcome it.

L A D Y O R S A N.

Think, my child, that you can contribute to indemnify me for what I lose.——

Nothing can ever efface Emilia from my remembrance; but if her happiness is secured, and I can find in her sisters, the same virtues and affection, I shall not complain of my lot. — Alas! if I had not loved her but for her own sake, I might have settled her in as splendid a situation, and without being separated from her.

AGATHA.

O heavens! and how?

LADY ORSAN.

Baron Vernon asked her of me.

AGATHA.

Baron Vernon!

LADY ORSAN.

He wrote to me, for that purpose, six months ago; I have kept his letter, I will shew it to you.

AGATHA.

How could he, with a person so ill calculated to please, think of my sister — besides, he is more than fifty years of age.

L A D Y O R S A N.

It was the disproportion of age, and the disgusting defects of his figure, which made me refuse him. However, he has a great name in the world, and ten thousand a year. Emilia never would have left me; I was certain of her obedience; I had but one word to say, and I did not hesitate an instant. The principal duty of a mother is to give her daughter a husband she can love. I have long reflected on this sacred obligation, which is too frequently forgotten by avarice and ambition, and I replied to the Baron in such a manner, as to leave him without a hope.

A G A T H A.

I cannot but admire you——And does my sister know these particulars?

L A D Y O R S A N.

No, I concealed them from her, in the dread that the certainty of passing her life with me, would make her prefer that settlement to all others. This is a secret I entrust to you, my dear Agatha, because you may

derive a useful lesson from it, how you ought to love—I shall tell you more—Heaven is willing to try me on all points this day.— I this very morning received a letter from Baron Vernon, in which he renews his former propofals more forcibly than ever—

AGATHA.

Good God!—

LADY ORSAN.

In fhort, I did my duty—But I hear Lucetta's voice.—What is ſhe coming to tell us?

AGATHA.

My ſiſters are with her—Alas, they are in tears!—

S C E N E III.

LADY ORSAN, EMILIA, AGATHA,
HARRIOT, LUCETTA.

LUCETTA, *to Lady Orsan.*

Ah, Madam!—

LADY ORSAN.

Well, what is the matter?

LUCETTA.

The Lawyer is come. — Count Moncalde and every body are in the Saloon—My Lord desired you should be informed that all who were expected are come, but the Marchioness Aurora.

LADY ORSAN.

Very well—Agatha, Harriot, go back to your father; tell him, that as soon as my niece arrives, I beg he will send to let me know—Go—and leave me alone with Emilia.

(They go out weeping.)

SCENE IV.

LADY ORSAN, EMILIA.

EMILIA.

Mother, my dear Mother, what a moment !
How can I appear within !——what dreadful-
haste !——Alas ! I see but too plainly what
it presages. —— Undoubtedly a speedy de-
parture. —— I shall die——yes, I believe I
shall.——

LADY ORSAN.

Summon up all your reason, my dear
child——mine alone is not sufficient for me,
think of that——I have need of you to se-
cond me, my girl ; you promised me, and I
depend upon it. Alas ! I foresee we must re-
solve on a speedy separation——

EMILIA.

Good heaven !——what, in a month ?——
You do not answer me. —— In some days

perhaps——Good God, what cruelty——You know it mama, conceal nothing from me; at least let me learn my fate from your mouth!——

L A D Y O R S A N.

I do not know when——but I believe it will be soon.

E M I L I A.

Is it possible?——

L A D Y O R S A N.

Time is precious to us, let us not lose any of it in superfluous regret——let our last conversations at least prove useful to my Emilia——She knows all the duties of an affectionate daughter; it remains for me to inform her of those of a wife and mother.

E M I L I A.

What can you tell me which your example has not taught?——I have never been from you; I know and I love all those sacred duties in which you would instruct me——I

ought to employ my whole attention to please, and more particularly to gain the confidence and esteem of him, who henceforth, alas ! is to be the sole arbiter of my fate——From duty, and to prevent him from ever abusing his authority over me, and making me feel it with severity, I shall convince him by my conduct, that I know it, and that I submit to it ; if he is unjust, I ought not to employ any means but mildness and indulgence to reclaim him ; I must forbid myself making use of reproaches with him, and conceal his faults from all the world : if he loves me, I will endeavour to give him salutary counsels, and shall take no advantage of the power I may have over his heart, but for his interest, his happiness, and his honour ; in short, I know that without oeconomy and an assiduous attention to domestic cares, I shall discharge my duty but imperfectly——For those of a mother, the same model has served equally well to instruct me——To live only for her children ; to renounce dissipation and pleasures, that she may dedicate herself entirely to their education ; to pass the day in giving them lessons, and a part of the night in study

to instruct herself for their sakes ; to sacrifice to them with joy her youth, her time and her health——this is, not what is due to them, but the excellent example which was set me. (*She falls at her mother's feet.*) O mother ! allow the eldest of your children, she who by her age ought to be best acquainted with the extent of your goodness, in this afflicting moment, to express to you in the name of the rest, their love and gratitude——They will make you happy, you may be assured of it. These happy children who remain with you, will indemnify you for the loss of an unfortunate daughter.——And I, at the feet of the best of mothers, swear to her, that her virtues and her instructions shall never be effaced from my memory——Yes, I shall be worthy of you ; I cannot promise that I shall equal you, but at least I shall attempt it, and all the happiness of my life shall be dedicated to that laudable ambition.

L A D Y O R S A N.

My daughter——O my dear and sincere friend ! Could heaven, which carries thee from

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thy mother, soften the rigour of such a painful separation, but by letting me know that from henceforth at least my counsels are not necessary; O inestimable reward of all my cares——Go then, set out with courage, you leave me without one uneasy apprehension——My tears flow without remission, but they are delicious——I am sure of thy principles and thy understanding; the first prayer of my heart is granted——If fate had not parted us, what felicity would have been comparable to mine.——But alas! can we hope to enjoy happiness without allay? Emilia is my daughter——Heaven has been sufficiently kind to me——Somebody comes——to look for us no doubt——

EMILIA.

What, already?

S C E N E V.

LADY ORSAN, EMILIA, LUCETTA.

LUCETTA.

You are waited for, Madam.

LADY ORSAN.

Is my niece come?

LUCETTA.

No, Madam, she does not come; she has sent an apology——

LADY ORSAN.

Let us go, my child.

EMILIA.

One moment—I cannot support myself.—
Ah, what are you going to do? What are
you going to sign?——You are going to lay
down an authority which was so dear to me,
and which never was exercised but for my
interest and my happiness: good God, this
evening I shall depend upon another!—That
idea, at this moment, dismays me more than

ever—Ah Mama, it is not too late, I conjure you let us delay ; have pity on my trouble and dreadful distress—

LADY ORSAN.

Can you think of such a thing, my dear Emilia !

SCENE VI.

LADY ORSAN, EMILIA, CELIA,
LUCETTA.

CELIA.

(Entering quickly with an air of emotion and joy.)

I come to look for you—What both in tears !—Embrace me, Sister, and you likewise, my lovely Emilia—I cannot restrain my joy—If you knew all—Count Moncalde !—I love him to distraction—When you shall hear the contract of marriage—I believe you will be pleased with it,

EMILIA.

Ah, dear Aunt, can interest or the most

splendid advantages divert me one instant from so just a cause of sorrow?—

C E L I A.

In short—I know what I say—Come, come, come along, for you are impatiently expected—

L A D Y O R S A N.

Come, my girl—

E M I L I A.

O Mama!—

(Lady Orsan takes her daughter under her arm and passes on before.)

C E L I A *aside.*

I am transported—one moment longer, and the secret would have escaped me.

(She goes out.)

L U C E T T A *alone.*

Madam Celia has a very extraordinary appearance of gaiety—I observed my Lady and Miss Emilia were shocked at it; and I am so myself—A starting tear, and such transports for a pecuniary consideration—

O fy, that is bad; it would be better to conceal such excessive joy, it is so disgusting! Ah! here comes the poor Governess,

SCENE VII.

MRS. DAVERS, LUCETTA.

LUCETTA.

You could not stay the reading of the articles?

MRS. DAVERS.

No, I had not courage—

LUCETTA.

Nor I neither. My God, who would have told us we should have been so melancholy at the marriage of Miss Emilia! The whole family are in distress; there is not a servant but is in the greatest trouble.

MRS. DAVERS.

I am at least certain the contract is made in the most advantageous manner for Miss

Emilia; for passing into a closet, while my Lady was waited for, I saw Madam Celia and Count Moncalde together, when she expressed her joy and surprise, by the most lively and even exaggerated exclamations, if I may presume to say so, whatever may be the advantages to her niece.

LUCETTA.

Probably he settles his whole fortune on her.

MRS. DAVERS.

I do not doubt it. But certainly that will not be a consolation for the poor child——
Don't I hear my Lady's voice?——

LUCETTA.

My God! yes, it is she!——How pale she is!——Madam Celia supports her——

S C E N E VIII.

LADY ORSAN, CELIA, MRS. DAVERS,
LUCETTA.

CELIA.

A chair, a chair!—I suspected it; she could not stand the reading of the contract—Sit down, my heart. (*Lady Orsan sits down and pulls a handkerchief out of her pocket, with which she covers her face.*)

LUCETTA.

Is my Lady taken ill?—

CELIA.

It will go off, it will go off—

LUCETTA, *low to Mrs. Davers.*

See that look of satisfaction in Madam Celia—

MRS. DAVERS, *low.*

Was ever the like!—

CELIA.

Leave me alone with her—Go, go I pray you, Mrs. Davers; and you too, Lucetta; don't be uneasy—there is no cause for it, only leave us.

LUCETTA, (*aside.*) *looking at Celia.*

This is very extraordinary; there must be something under this. (*She goes out with Mrs. Davers.*)

SCENE IX.

LADY ORSAN, CELIA.

CELIA, *aside.*

How shall I prepare her for such joyful tidings! (*Aloud.*) Dear Sister, be calm: your grief is really unreasonable—

LADY ORSAN.

It is at least excessive—But was ever grief more justly founded?

CELIA.

As to its being well founded—but however, you should endeavour to moderate its excess—for in fact, you cannot dispense with returning to the Saloon—

LADY ORSAN, *rising*.

You are right, and I ought not to have left it, but you hurried me away.—

CELIA.

You was ready to faint.—

LADY ORSAN.

And my daughter, what will she think of such weakness? Come, let us return; come and conduct me.—

CELIA.

There is no hurry.

LADY ORSAN.

My daughter will come in search of me.

CELIA.

No, I charged her father to keep her, and it was agreed to read the contract in your

absence; when the reading is over, they will come and find you; you may sign it without looking at it—yes, yes,—upon my word—

L A D Y O R S A N.

But I was present, and did not hear you say all this.—

C E L I A.

Yes, you was present, but your mind was otherways engaged, so was Emilia's—I settled it with your husband and Count Moncalde, and I led you out at the very instant when you was going to lose all sense.—Sit down, for you still have a wild look, which frightens me.

L A D Y O R S A N, *sitting down.*

I have only some confused ideas indeed, of what passed in the Saloon.

C E L I A.

I believe so, for in leaving it you fainted away; you was near a quarter of an hour in the antichamber, absolutely without sense.

LADY ORSAN.

And did my daughter know it?—

CELIA.

No, no, I pray you be calm—

LADY ORSAN.

Let us return to the Saloon — Give me your arm.

CELIA.

Not yet—

LADY ORSAN, *rising*.

Why do you detain me?—Is Emilia taken ill?—Do not conceal any thing from me.

CELIA.

Look at me well, and see if there is any thing in my countenance that speaks distress.
(*Lady Orsan looks at her, Celia smiles and embraces her.*)

LADY ORSAN, *with astonishment*.

Sister!—

C E L I A.

I laugh—I cry—I am out of my wits——

L A D Y O R S A N, *with excessive emotion.*

What?——How is this——what do you mean?——

C E L I A.

So, you are already quite in a flurry.—I know a little secret that will give you pleasure, but——

L A D Y O R S A N.

Can you keep it, Sister, and see me in this situation?——

C E L I A.

It is but a trifle, however, in short——
First of all, Count Moncalde settles his whole fortune upon your daughter——and then——
I dare not go on——

L A D Y O R S A N.

Sister, my dear Sister, what would you make me imagine?——Perhaps his departure will not be so soon.——

CELIA.

That is it.

LADY ORSAN.

O God!—how long will he remain?

CELIA.

Gently—Be calm first, and then I will answer you.

LADY ORSAN.

O my God!—Can he!—Six months; perhaps a year?—

CELIA.

Gently—or I will be silent—

LADY ORSAN.

My dear, dear Sister—Excuse me—speak; do not be afraid—I am calm—

CELIA.

And you tremble; you are exhausted, you can scarce breathe.

LADY ORSAN.

Tell me then:—Speak, for pity sake—

C E L I A.

Hear me then with patience. Count Montcalde, this evening, delighted at the thoughts of owing his happiness to me, from gratitude entrusted me with that little secret; he proposed a pleasure to himself in surprising you; but the situation we saw you in when the contract was begun to be read, convinced him that some preparations were necessary to announce it to you; I undertook it.—At this very instant they are preparing your daughter, and—

L A D Y O R S A N.

Dear Sister, go on and explain yourself: Dread the making me expect too much by your excessive caution.

C E L I A.

O, I dread nothing—

L A D Y O R S A N.

Heavens!—and instead of one year, I should flatter myself with the hope of two;—or three.—

CELIA.

That is as you please——

LADY ORSAN.

Is it possible?——Sister!——Emilia!——
my daughter——where is she——Let us go——

CELIA.

I tell you they are preparing her.

LADY ORSAN.

Well——

CELIA.

My dear Sister, I can no longer resist.——
You are the happiest of mothers——

LADY ORSAN.

What!——my daughter——Good heavens!
I hear her——

CELIA.

Yes, it is she; I sacrifice to her the inexpressible pleasure of acquainting you with the excess of your happiness.

SCENE X.

LADY ORSAN, CELIA, EMILIA.

EMILIA.

*(Violently agitated, and running with the greatest precipitation.)*O mother! *(She rushes into her arms.)*

LADY ORSAN.

My child!—

EMILIA.

Mama, I shall never leave you!—

LADY ORSAN.

Never!—Great God!—

CELIA.

(Ah, my Sister!—She staggers; she turns pale—Set a chair for her.—(Lady Orsan sinks down upon a chair, Emilia supports her in her arms.)

EMILIA.

O my dear mother, conceive my happiness!—You alone can judge of it!—

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LADY ORSAN.

You will never leave me! — Never — how is this? — What assurance shall I have of it? — Do they not abuse us? — A false hope would kill me —

CELIA.

Count Moncalde wanted to try your esteem for him, and the disinterestedness of your affection for Emilia; he was desirous that you should have the courage and glory of sacrificing your daughter, that he might have the merit and happiness of restoring your much loved child — All his property is in France; he will return no more to Portugal —

LADY ORSAN.

Is it possible? O heaven! — (*To Emilia.*)
And your father? —

EMILIA.

I left him in the arms of the Count; I came before them, I flew —

LADY ORSAN.

Most generous of men!—Let us run and find them.

CELIA.

They are coming; here they are—

LADY ORSAN.

I see him—O my son—(*She runs to meet Count Moncalde, who comes forward and throws himself at her feet. Agatha, Harriot, Mrs. Davers, Lucetta, and several other Domestic, run in a crowd and surround Lady Orsan, and by their attitudes express the greatest joy.*) (*Lady Orsan embracing Count Moncalde.*) My son, my son!—how well you deserve that pleasing title—You restore my daughter to me—I receive my life from you—(*To Lord Orsan.*) My dear husband!—my daughter!—my children!—my sister!—Embrace the most fortunate of mothers!—(*Count Moncalde, still at the feet of Lady Orsan, holds one of her hands which he kisses, weeping; Lord Orsan and Emilia come forward and support*)

374 THE GOOD MOTHER.

Lady Orfan in their arms; Celia, Agatha and Harriot run and embrace her; while Mrs. Davers and Lucetta take hold of her hand and kiss it: the other Domestics remain at some distance, and by different gestures express the affectionate interest they take in the Scene. All the movements of this dumb-show should be extremely quick and rapid.—The curtain drops.)

THE END.

THE

BUSY BODY,

COMEDY.

IN TWO ACTS.

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THE PERSONS.

THE BARONESS of ARZELL.

LAURETTA, *Daughter of the Baronefs.*

LISETTA, *the Baronefs's Maid.*

BELINDA, *Friend of the Baronefs.*

Mrs. ROGERS, *Lauretta's Governess.*

Lady BELVILLE.

CAROLINE, *Daughter of Lady Belville.*

A VALET.

Scene at Paris, in the House of the Baronefs,



Mrs. Rogers.

The daughter of Lady Bellville.

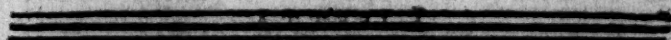
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Yes, but my Lady would not have it so.
BUSY BODY,

Lady Bellville not to speak of it.

A COMEDY.

I for what reason?



How do I know, my Lady spends her
life in forming secret plans, which are ruin-
telling to all in her chain; between you
and I, she is indignant and mysterious.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Stage represents a Saloon.

MRS. ROGERS, LISETTA

LISETTA.

YES, it is certain: My Lady settled it
this morning in my presence; her son is to
marry Miss Caroline.

MRS. ROGERS.

The daughter of Lady Belville?

LISETTA.

Yes; but my Lady would not have it mentioned in public as yet: she has even begged Lady Belville not to speak of it.

MRS. ROGERS.

For what reason?

LISETTA.

How do I know; my Lady spends her life in forming secret plans, which are unintelligible; it is her character; between you and I, she is indiscreet and mysterious; I have observed it a thousand times.

MRS. ROGERS.

She has a great share of understanding, however.

LISETTA.

The world thinks otherwise; yet she does what she pleases; she knows every body, and intermeddles in every thing: she is a woman of astonishing activity.

MRS. ROGERS.

I blame her only for keeping her daughter in the convent, ever since she was three years old; she is so rich, she might very well have had her educated at home.

L I S E T T A .

Yet she greatly loves Miss Lauretta; but she has so many affairs to manage, that she cannot employ herself in the care of her daughter's education.

MRS. ROGERS,

It is a pity, for Miss Lauretta has such a charming disposition.

L I S E T T A .

She has a good heart indeed; she seems to love her brother excessively.

MRS. ROGERS.

Yes, he comes frequently to the convent to see us, and when Miss Lauretta is in the parlour with him, it is a pleasure to hear them prate.

L I S E T T A .

She speaks a great deal indeed.

MRS. ROGERS.

O you have seen nothing; she has been here but three days, and is not yet at her ease; but in the convent, she diverts every body. She was born to prate; at four years old she had her *little fly remarks*, that would make one almost die with laughing.

LISSETTA.

And, at fifteen, she seems to me to have *little stories*, which last very long, and which, I believe, are not always perfectly true. In short, to say it at once, I suspect she is a little bit of a liar.

MRS. ROGERS.

Marry, that happens sometimes from her passion for chattering.

LISSETTA.

O fy, it is dreadful.

MRS. ROGERS.

She only tells little innocent lies, that do no harm to any body.

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L I S E T T A.

But, when people tell lies for their pleasure, they may very soon learn to lie from interest.

M R S. R O G E R S.

O no, it is meer childishness; that will wear off. She speaks whatever comes uppermost; the child has such a flow of spirits, she cannot keep her mouth shut one moment. Sometimes when she is sitting by me, at work, she prates; ay she prates as if she was reading, and that for hours together.

L I S E T T A.

What can she find to say?

M R S. R O G E R S.

O tales — nonsense. — In short, rather than not speak at all, she will speak ill of herself.

L I S E T T A.

Judge then if she can be capable of speaking ill of her neighbour.

MRS. ROGERS.

That will go off, it will go off in time;
I was just the same in my youth.

LISSETTA.

And you have some tolerable remains still.

MRS. ROGERS.

Apropos, tell me then; my Lady is in
great intimacy with Madam Saint Alban;
I did not know that.

LISSETTA.

O that is only of a late date; she has some
view in it, no doubt.

MRS. ROGERS.

She goes there three or four times a day; I
learned that from my daughter, who is Madam
Saint Alban's maid and favourite, for my
daughter is her confidant, I can assure you.
Madam Saint Alban's is an excellent place,
and no one ever leaves it without obtaining
an employment. But my Lady has more

power than she: only think how she has made the fortune of that old Valet-de-chambre, Bernard; he has a good place in one of the public Offices: She owed him only seven years wages, and has procured him for that, an employment worth a hundred and fifty pounds a year. There is generosity! and the more so, as Bernard is an idiot, who is only fit to wait in an antichamber. Then, there is the Tutor of the Marquis, to whom she only promised a salary of six hundred pounds at the end of ten years, is now Secretary to an Embassy; my Lady always exceeds her promises, and gives nothing out of her pocket; it is wonderful——really wonderful.

L I S E T T A.

For all this, would you think she is by no means happy?

M R S. R O G E R S.

How! not happy?

L I S E T T A.

I assure you there is nobody more to be pitied; I see that plainly. In the first place,

the very agitated life she leads has ruined her health; then she does not enjoy her influence, from the constant apprehension of losing it; by doing a favour to one person, she disoblige a number, and every day creates to herself new enemies; and by a singular misfortune, those upon whom she heaps her favours, dispense with being grateful, alleging, that, whatever she does for them, has her personal interest for its motive. Besides, she is eternally harrassed with disquiet and vexation. She is much less pleased with success, than afflicted at a disappointment. The disgrace of a man in power, the slightest change in the ministry, break her rest, and occasion dreadful agitations; she complains incessantly of the abuse of her enemies, the malicious interpretations of the world, the ingratitude of those whom she has patronised, and the mortal vexation she is obliged so frequently to submit to, by always sacrificing her taste to her interest; by composing her company, not of the most agreeable people, but of those who can be most useful to her in her projects; in short by renouncing pleasure, repose and friendship,

to give herself up entirely to intrigue and business.

MRS. ROGERS.

She has no friends!—— But Madam Belinda?——

L I S E T T A.

Yes, and she has quarrelled with her two or three times already; Madam Belinda is so giddy——but she is somehow connected with Lady Belville, which is the cause of their last reconciliation.

MRS. ROGERS.

I hear Miss Laupetta's voice——

L I S E T T A.

Ay, she is always heard before she is seen. Yes, here she comes.

SCENE II.

LAURETTA, MRS. ROGERS,
LISSETTA.

LAURETTA.

Mrs. Rogers!—Ha, and Lisetta too, I am happy to find you together, for I have a thousand things to tell you.—I am at the very summit of my wishes; my brother is going to be married, it is no longer a secret; mama has entrusted me with it; I suspected it—Mr. Mirvan, as you know, is the brother of Lady Belville; I observed that mama paid a preternatural attention to him—I say *preternatural*, because he is the most tiresome creature in the world, that Mr. Mirvan—he is deaf and stammers—poor man!—and excessive silent.—No great matter in that, but he does not hear one word that is said to him!—and yet Mama, in spite of all this, has a regard for him!—and I heard her say to him, that he might depend

upon it, she would procure the vacant Government for him, and that her happiness was engaged in the business—O I could easily conceive there was something extraordinary under this, and I find that Mr. Mirvan is the brother of Lady Belville, and consequently the uncle of my intended sister-in-law—Lisetta, you know Caroline!—Is she not charming, gentle, and graceful in her manner? a character perfectly uniform; so chearful, such accomplishments, understanding, and a temper—a most incomparable temper—

MRS. ROGERS.

But Miss, one would think you had passed your life with her, yet you never have seen her but once at a ball last winter, and about a quarter of an hour yesterday, with your Mama.

LAURETTA.

Yes, but I chatted with her a good deal.

MRS. ROGERS.

How is that possible? You could not speak to her yesterday.

LAURETTA.

That is true ; but the day I saw her at the ball we had a long conversation together—— Nothing can be more extraordinary ; I recollect she said to me, that she would be happy if she had a sister ; I answered, I should think myself happy if I had such a sister as she—— It is very singular—but you have not heard all yet——The tear started in her eye, she embraced me ; at that instant I thought of my brother, and I exclaimed ; but I have a brother !—She blushed, and so did I—— She very well conceived my idea——I saw it plainly. In a minute after, my brother came and begged to have the honour of dancing with her.

L I S E T T A.

I beg leave to stop you, Miss ; your brother was not in Paris, he passed the whole winter in Strasbourg.

MRS. ROGERS, *laughing*.

Ha, ha, ha ! poor child, she is quite overthrown——what a pity you interrupted her,

she was going to tell a most charming story ——

L I S E T T A.

I don't doubt but Miss tells a story very well, but she has occasion for a better memory ——

L A U R E T T A, *embarrassed.*

Truly — I did believe it — but you are right Lisetta; I am not offended with you for having checked me. ——

L I S E T T A.

Miss, it is from attachment; I am sorry to see you have a fault ——

L A U R E T T A.

What fault, Lisetta?

L I S E T T A.

Alas, Miss! I dare not even name it ——

L A U R E T T A.

How so? —— But Mrs. Rogers ——

MRS. ROGERS.

Well Miss, it is, that you talk too much;
I told you so before——

LAURETTA, *to Mrs. Rogers.*

But you used to love to hear me tell stories
—— I always saw you laugh —— and you
yourself tell new ones every day——

MRS. ROGERS.

Yes surely, to pass the time——But what
was well enough for you, when a child,
won't do now. Consider, you are fifteen,
and you must leave off such a custom.

LAURETTA.

Well then, take it from me, since it was
you that gave it me.

LISSETTA.

Alas! it is more easy to acquire habits,
than to get rid of them——But hush, here is
my Lady——Let us be gone.

(She and Mrs. Rogers go out.)

S C E N E III.

The BARONESS, BELINDA, LAURETTA.

BARONESS, *with a packet of letters in
her hand, and a Valet behind her.*

What an enormous packet!—

(She reads to herself.)

BELINDA.

Must you answer all that!

BARONESS, *still reading.*

O my God!—

BELINDA.

What is the matter?—

BARONESS.

This is dreadful—That wretched creature,
Simon, for whom I procured an employment,
has made a fraudulent bankruptcy!—

BELINDA.

I am not surpris'd at it—he was a very
bad man—Apropos, do you know that the

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tutor whom you recommended so strongly to the Viscountess, run off the day before yesterday, having stolen a thousand pounds worth of diamonds?

BARONESS.

Yes, I heard it; it is a disagreeable adventure.—How that man has deceived me!—I own I believed him to be a man of superior merit.

LAURETTA.

O, I am sorry for it—I knew him. Was it not he, Mama, that sung the droll songs, and used to mimic Harlequin and Pierrot so well?

BARONESS, *to the Valet.*

Put all these papers in my closet—Do you hear?—A man dressed in black will perhaps be here in half an hour, desire him to walk into the parlour, and do you come immediately and acquaint me—Tell Peter to put on a grey coat, give him this letter, and let him carry it to where it is directed, but not before twilight—do you hear?—Wait a little

—let me recollect—ay, if that young Painter returns, let him know that he will certainly be received at the Academy of Painting— But he must finish the picture of my little dog; do not forget to tell him that—Go then — One moment — I believe that is all — Yes, go away. (*The Valet goes out.*) Well, Lauretta, I have something to say to you: Lady Belville and Miss Belville are to be here to-day; I desire you will employ all your attention to please the young lady.

LAURETTA.

Caroline? — Most willingly, Mama, I love her with all my heart.

BARONESS.

How! do you know her?

LAURETTA.

Yes, Mama, very well; I saw her at the ball; we conversed together. I frequently mentioned my brother to her, and I believe she is very well inclined in his favour. Besides, she really has confidence in me. —

BARONESS.

A very fortunate accident this; I shall profit by it. You must endeavour to have a particular conversation with her to-day, and give me an account of your discourse afterwards.

LAURETTA,

Yes, Mama——

BARONESS.

Go, my girl, go back to your Governess.

LAURETTA.

Mama, will you let me tell you in what manner I propose to speak to her of my brother——First I will begin——

BARONESS.

Not now; we will talk of that by and by.

LAURETTA.

O, I die with impatience to converse with her: I wish I was with her now——In the first place I will tell her——

BARONESS.

That is enough, Lauretta. Go my child.
(Lauretta kisses her mother's hand, and goes out.)

SCENE IV.

BARONESS, BELINDA.

BARONESS.

Well, I am at last sure of this marriage, which I have so earnestly desired; I have conducted this affair with tolerable address——I have neglected nothing——I knew, for instance, that Lifetta was acquainted with one of Lady Belville's maids, and I charged her to gain her confidence; Lifetta is a sensible girl, and acquitted herself of this commission with great address.——

BELINDA.

I believe it is not the first of the kind she has received from you.

BARONESS.

It is chiefly by neglecting none of the little means, that people succeed.

BELINDA.

Yes, indeed; that is the mystery of the

trade, and it is that which makes ill-inclined people say, that we intriguers owe our success less to our understanding than to a certain suppleness of temper.

BARONESS.

Intriguers! — Truly you have strange expressions —

BELINDA.

A little uncouth, is it not? — If I was as compleat in those affairs as you are, I would not make such a confession, but I am only an Intriguer from whim, and by fits, and I confess it ingenuously; when I am perfected I will change my language, for I find that the sublimity of the profession is always to conceal the truth, even *tete a tete* with one's friend. — But let us return to the marriage affair; I own to you that I still am not without my fears.

BARONESS.

For my part, I have none, if you will continue the same zeal to serve me with Lady Belville.

BELINDA.

I promised you, and you may depend upon it; but I am curious, and you must conceal nothing from me; I suspect that you do not tell me all.

BARONESS.

Who, I!—

BELINDA.

O I am sure of it. What is the meaning of all these visits you have been making to Lady Saint-Alban these eight days. Now be sincere, or I honestly tell you, that I have an intrigue prepared to discover what you intend to conceal.

BARONESS.

You prevent me, for truly it was my purpose to mention it to you.

BELINDA.

Well then, no pretended confidences, for I tell you beforehand, that my brother is the intimate friend of Lady Saint-Alban; and

he returns this evening from the country ; so that I assure you I shall know the truth of the affair from him.

BARONESS.

My God ! it is not you I wish to deceive ; you do me injustice, my dear Belinda.

BELINDA.

I am afraid of your inattention ; I recollect to have seen some such instances. But let us come to the point——

BARONESS.

Well then, to secure this marriage, I thought it would be a good scheme to obtain the promise of a place at court for my intended daughter-in-law. I took some steps for that purpose, and was told there was an engagement which opposed my request : I could not obtain the name of the person, but I discovered that Lady Saint-Alban intermeddled in the business : As she has no children, I thought she could not be deeply interested ; and having a possibility of serving her where her

personal interest is concerned, I went to wait upon her.

BELINDA.

So you proposed to her to renounce the place, and to carry the affair for her, in which she is personally concerned.

BARONESS.

Hear me to the end. I began by making her an offer of my services, and then asked her the name of the person to whom the place was promised; —as you may well imagine, this question was not made without employing some address——

BELINDA.

O, I will trust you for that.

BARONESS.

In fact, I surpassed myself——She told me that the place was promised to the daughter of one of her friends, but she had given her word of honour she would not tell the name.

BELINDA.

So then all your art was lost: How often

have you thus lavished it away to no purpose, and solely for your conscience sake!

BARONESS.

I then returned, and asked her, if the man was a military man, and capable of holding a Government; she said he was——

BELINDA.

You offered to obtain this vacant Government for him, if he would give up this place?

BARONESS.

Just so; but I took the precaution to make Lady Saint-Alban promise she would not name me to this man, who wished himself to remain unknown. In short, she mentioned my proposal to him this morning; he seemed greatly tempted; he desired some hours to consider of it, and is to give a positive answer this evening.

BELINDA.

I shall not recover my surprise.

BARONESS.

How do you like that stroke? — I should tell you, that since yesterday I have been sure of obtaining that Government for whomsoever I please. —

BELINDA.

But you have promised to Mr. Mirvan, the brother of Lady Belville, to employ all your interest to obtain it for him; how will you extricate yourself in that quarter?

BARONESS.

Nothing more easy; he will believe I have failed; I will acquaint Lady Belville that her daughter shall have a place; I will press the marriage; and the ceremony once over, I shall be perfectly indifferent as to the rest. I must own to you, I am sincerely sorry for having given that poor Mr. Mirvan false hopes, and being under the necessity of disappointing him: however, I will do him a service on some other occasion; and besides, I only sacrifice him to the interest of his niece,

whom he greatly loves; so that in the main it is all very innocent——

BELINDA.

Yes, yes; it were to be wished that intrigues had never produced any thing worse— But tell me, do you not suspect who the man is, who has procured the place for his daughter?

BARONESS.

No, I could not discover——I cannot find any intimate friend of Lady St. Alban, who has a daughter——

BELINDA.

However, you are to know the answer this evening.

BARONESS.

Yes, he is to be with Lady St. Alban at seven o'clock, and I have given her leave to name me if he agrees: but she is to insist upon his keeping the secret till the marriage is concluded.

BELINDA.

It is certain that a place to offer in addition, makes your son a still better match;

however, I believe, that without giving yourself so much trouble, you might perhaps have succeeded more certainly; for if Lady Belville discovers all these intrigues, the marriage will be broken off; she is an extraordinary woman; she lived formerly at Court, but these ten years has devoted herself entirely to the education of her daughter; she has almost renounced the world, and passes the greatest part of her life upon her estate; solitude has given a turn of originality to her character; she has some very singular ideas; for instance, she has the most determined aversion to every thing that has the least appearance of intrigue, and still retains some prejudice against you on that account, notwithstanding the pains I have taken to dissuade her. Therefore take care, if you would have followed my advice, you had nothing to do but to remain quiet, and the marriage would have been sure; but you have an activity which nothing can moderate, and an astonishing antipathy to repose——

BARONESS.

We shall succeed, no doubt of it. Would Lady Belville have consented to come to my

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house; to bring her daughter with her, and to speak to me herself upon this business, if she was not at the bottom of her heart already determined?

BELINDA.

But yesterday only was the first time of coming to your house; she has not given you a positive promise, and besides, do you know the reason that made her resolve to see you? It is to study and know you——

BARONESS.

To study me, that is charming——And do you think this examination is very perplexing?——Does it alarm you much?

BELINDA.

It does a little.

BARONESS.

Without vanity however, I believe if it was of great importance to me to get the better of Lady Belville, I should accomplish it.

BELINDA.

I know you have done miracles in that way; but you have never had to do with a

person who has had fifteen years experience, and ten years of reflection.

BARONESS.

Truly she is a woman of a very limited understanding, you may depend upon it.

BELINDA.

Every one who is not subtle and shrewd, are stupid in your eyes; I have made that remark a thousand times. As you are mistress of superior address, you easily get the better of artifice, but you are not sufficiently diffident of ingenuousness and natural understanding; yet you may depend upon it that nothing disconcerts trick and cunning so much as frankness and sincerity—I who now tell it you, have been caught in that way myself, and for that very reason have renounced all intrigue and evasion—In short, however, I am going to employ it once more to serve you; I am going to tell lies to poor Lady Belville who confides in me, and in this I give you a strong proof of friendship. This affair is of such importance

to you, that I cannot refuse to lend my aid, but at the same time I cannot conceal from you that I have very unfavourable forebodings: Lady Belville, I own, impresses me with awe; she has a candour and natural sincerity which affect me in spite of myself; when I attempt to seduce her, she wins me; and her goodness and rectitude have made me blush in secret a thousand times at my deceit and at myself.

BARONESS.

Your deceit!—You are a fool; is not my son an excellent match? By his birth and fortune is he not entitled to pretend to Lady Belville's daughter? In contributing to the success of this business, will you occasion this young person to make an improper marriage?

BELINDA.

No, to be sure; but in short, to determine Lady Belville, it is necessary to deceive her as to your character, and in one word, to tell a thousand lies——

BARONESS.

You would perhaps persuade me that you never told a lie?

BELINDA.

O my God, no; I have had that complaisance so often for you! But I only tell lies from weakness and not from inclination, so that remorse and disgust immediately follow the offence.

BARONESS.

I do not understand any thing of this parade of fine sentiments; but what I can perceive is, that certainly some interest, of which I am ignorant, makes you talk this language.

BELINDA.

So, you do not believe me?

BARONESS.

But *such idle stuff* never could impose upon me; you know that, my dear Belinda.

BELINDA.

Woe to them who call the simple emotions of repentance and sensibility, *idle stuff*. When

I act against my conscience, I am at least pleased with the difficulties I encounter; if it makes me suffer, at the same time it comforts me, by proving that the action which my reason condemns was repugnant to my heart, and not natural to it; I then ascribe my faults to bad counsels and dangerous connections; I become reconciled to myself; and I can hope that experience and reflection will snatch me from errors which I lament and hate.

BARONESS.

Such a declamation! — Such violence! —
You are certainly in a passion——

BELINDA.

Yes, I own I am. I cannot endure to see that injurious distrust which never leaves you: You have the absurdity always to suspect secret and mysterious designs; words are nothing with you, but deceitful signs made to disguise the truth—— With such ideas how can you hope to preserve friends?

But I never will again trouble or embroil myself; you have frequently served me, and, whatever were your motives, I ought never to forget it. I can be useful to you; I will do my endeavour, and you may depend upon it; but I protest to you it is the last time I will suffer my complaisance to lead me to act contrary to my principles and my inclination.

BARONESS.

For my part, I will not enter into the same engagement, for I find it will be no pain to me to oblige you, and testify my gratitude.

BELINDA.

So you insult me again; do you think it is necessary to promise me rewards to rekindle my zeal?

BARONESS.

My God! how captious and touchy you are——every thing I say to you disgusts.—

BELINDA.

It is because you employ artifice; because you suspect that I do, while in fact I have none; it is thus that art becomes offensive! —I repeat it to you once more, take care how you behave to Lady Belville; take care, that in attempting to flatter her, you do not shock her mortally: think only, she is rectitude and candour itself; and, take my word for it, in your dealings with her, you had better renounce all fruitless evasions.

A VALET to the Baronefs.

Madam, the man dressed in black, is in the parlour——

BARONESS,

Very well. Is the carriage ready?

VALET.

Yes, Madam.

BARONESS to Belinda.

I must go this moment about some business of importance, but I will return immediately; do not go away, for I have still several things to say to you.

BELINDA.

Very well ; I will wait your return.

(The Baronefs goes out in a hurry.)

S C E N E V.BELINDA, *alone.*

What a woman!—what a character!——
It is a great folly to have a friendship for
her—Can ſhe return it?——To engage with
Mr. Mirvan, to obtain this government for
him, and yet procure it for another!——
And this very morning, ſhe renewed all her
proteſtations to him in my preſence!——
What diſſimulation!——However, I have
ſtill promiſed to ſerve her upon this occaſion,
and in ſpite of my reluctance and ſcruples,
I ſhall keep my word.——Into what a per-
plexing ſituation I have brought myſelf——
I muſt either act againſt my conſcience, or
betray a perſon whom I loved, and with
whom I appeared in the eyes of the world
to be intimately connected!——Alas! I find

that our virtues chiefly depend on the happy choice of our friends.—Somebody comes —It is Lady Belville; I must dissemble.

SCENE VI.

LADY BELVILLE, BELINDA,

BELINDA, coming forward to Lady Belville.

The Baroness has just gone out, but she will return immediately.

LADY BELVILLE.

I am not sorry to find you alone; you have shewn so much regard for me, Madam, that every day adds to my confidence in you; however, as you are the intimate friend of the Baroness, I may suspect you of partiality; but I am sure your heart is good, it is therefore impossible for me to dread your having any intention to deceive me.

BELINDA.

Well, Madam, you have already seen the Baroness twice, what is your opinion of her?

LADY BELVILLE.

She seems very affected——I could easily perceive she was under constraint with me. In half an hour's conversation, she found means to utter ten sentences against intrigue and dissimulation: she, a hundred times, boasted of her *candour and simplicity*; she endeavoured, by every imaginable way, to praise and flatter me——All that has greatly displeased me, I own.

BELINDA.

Do not judge of her from that. She knew your prejudices against her; is it not to be expected then, that she could not be perfectly at her ease with you?

LADY BELVILLE.

To a noble and ingenuous mind, that kind of perplexity could only inspire a cold reserve; it is not natural to load a person with

caresses and encomiums, who we know is prepossessed against us; she wanted to deceive me, but she had not address sufficient upon that occasion. Without an upright and a feeling heart, the calculations of the understanding are often erroneous.—But I will suspend my opinion; I know how unreasonable it is to judge upon slight grounds; and I am so deeply interested in knowing the Baroness thoroughly. — You know, Madam, the affection I have for my daughter; I have employed all my attention to form her disposition; but she is only sixteen, and, in marrying her so young, I cannot dissemble, that the mother-in-law I shall choose for her, must perfect or spoil my work; that reflection has the greatest weight with me. Can I give up my rights over my daughter, to a person for whom I have no esteem?

BELINDA.

No, surely; but you may depend upon it, that she will receive none but the best counsels from the Baroness——

LADY BELVILLE.

Counsels, Madam, are nothing without example.

BELINDA.

I see to what excess the enemies of the Baroness have abused her to you.

LADY BELVILLE.

It is alledged, that she is intriguing, and, if that imputation is well founded, certainly I shall not give her my daughter. But I know with what levity and injustice the world judges in that respect, and I am not ignorant that envy and malice, almost always ascribe to intrigue, what is frequently only the effect of good fortune or merit. For which reason, I repeat it to you, I will strip myself of every prejudice, and judge from my own observation.

BELINDA.

It is certain, the Baroness is of a very active disposition; she spares no pains to serve her friends, and, like all obliging people,

she is accused of intrigue by those who do not know her.

LADY BELVILLE.

How can so valuable a quality be mistaken for such a hateful vice? The desire of obliging proceeds from the most natural and pleasing emotions of a good heart, from a benevolence which seizes every opportunity of gratifying it; that pure and respectable disposition never can mislead; it may be dreaded, that, in doing a service, it may be guilty of injustice; but it will never produce secret plots, injurious intrigues, which, always selfish, are deaf to remorse, insensible to friendship, act only to gratify pride, and for self-interested motives.

BELINDA.

What a description! — Yes — if I knew any such, you would make me detest them. But, you say they have no remorse; I am sorry for it; then they go unpunished.

LADY BELVILLE.

Is not a deprivation of all the delicious

sentiments of pure souls, a sufficient punishment?—The most wicked of all men, is only such from his own fault, because he disdained to resist his passions; before his weakness had made him their slave, he undoubtedly knew compassion, affection, and some generous feelings; but having attained the fatal bounds of the last degree of corruption, the recollection of his early days still remains to him, and becomes a cruel and just punishment, by proving the existence of that virtue which he has betrayed, and the happiness which he has renounced.

BELINDA.

How happy I am in hearing you! But who is this coming to interrupt us already?

LADY BELVILLE.

It is my daughter.—

SCENE VII.

LADY BELVILLE, BELINDA, CAROLINE,

CAROLINE.

Mama——

LADY BELVILLE.

Well?

CAROLINE, *in a low voice.*

I want very much to speak with you.

BELINDA.

I will not constrain you —— You dine here?——

LADY BELVILLE.

Yes.

BELINDA.

The Baroness will certainly be back; I shall leave you, but I will send you notice when she arrives. (*She goes out.*)

S C E N E VIII.

LADY BELVILLE, CAROLINE.

LADY BELVILLE.

What do you want to say, my dear?—

CAROLINE.

My Uncle desires me to let you know, Mama, that the Government, of which he was so desirous, has been offered to him upon condition he will give up the place was promised to him for me. He adds, that in time he can have the Government conveyed to whomsoever you shall choose for your son-in-law, and till then, he will give him the appointments; he desires you will determine, and write to him immediately to let him know which you prefer.

LADY BELVILLE.

To propose the bartering of a place for a Government!—What is the meaning of all this intrigue?—

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CAROLINE.

My uncle desires you will not mention it, especially in this house.

LADY BELVILLE.

I see the reason; my brother, a long time ago, received a promise from the Barons, that she would solicit this favour for him, and he wants to conceal from her that he has applied elsewhere; I do not like this— This mysterious evasive conduct is very unlike my brother.—Besides, I see that he prefers the Government; he has a right to pretend to it from his services; so I shall advise him to accept it. But let us talk of a more important matter, of your marriage, my dear Caroline: I find in the match that is offered, great advantages in point of fortune; but above all things, I wish that the family, into whose hands I shall give up all that is dear to me, may be worthy to receive and adopt a daughter such as you. I wish that you may find examples of virtue, friends, and

more especially intelligent guides, of which one at your time of life has so much occasion. I have given no promise; I shall enter into no engagement without your consent; you will see the person who is proposed as a husband, this evening; you will pass the day with his mother and sister; you have a correct judgment, good sense, and a pure heart; that is sufficient to qualify you to observe for yourself: Examine the Baroness and her daughter with attention; remember that the first is desirous to take my place with you, and the other, in case of this marriage, should be your companion, your sister, and your friend.

C A R O L I N E.

Ah, Mama, who ever can fill up your place with me. The mother-in-law whom you choose for me, undoubtedly will be dear to me; she may depend upon my attachment and obedience; but I never can have but *one* mother, my true guide, and my first friend; my mother in short, for that sacred title includes all the rest; I shall not find her but in you, Mama, but in you alone——

LADY BELVILLE.

That preference is just, it is a source of happiness to me, and I depend upon its never changing; but my child, your mother-in-law will have a right to expect your confidence and attachment; it is of importance that you should esteem her, since one of your duties will be to love her——The choice then, my dear, is of equal consequence both to you and me——

CAROLINE.

It depends upon you; can I have any apprehensions? Your experience, Mama, and your affection for me, will make you easily penetrate the character of the Baroness.

LADY BELVILLE.

I shall employ all my attention. But, Caroline, I desire you will converse with her daughter, and endeavour to discover as nearly as you can, what her principles are; I look upon that means as one of the most certain to judge of the mother.

CAROLINE.

My cousin is in the same convent with Lauretta, and has spoken of her to me very frequently.

LADY BELVILLE.

Well?

CAROLINE.

She told me, that she has a most affectionate regard for her brother, and her heart is excellent; she has given me a thousand instances of her benevolence and goodness of heart that are truly engaging; in short, my cousin says, she knows but one fault in her; that of speaking too much.

LADY BELVILLE.

That is a very bad one. That fault may hurry her into so many vices——Slander, indiscretion, tricks and lies, proceed frequently much less from malice than an immoderate desire of speaking, and having always something to say. Besides, that imperfection is equally ridiculous and dangerous; it particularly deforms our sex, by depriving them

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of that air of reserve, modesty, and reflection, which makes them appear to such advantage; in short, it is equally hurtful to the understanding and to their captivating graces, by debarring them from the best means of obtaining instruction, which youth can find only in silence and observation——But we forget ourselves——I must write to your Uncle before dinner; let us go into the Baroness's closet. Come, my Girl.

(They go out.)

End of the First Act.

A C T II.

SCENE I.**CAROLINE, LAURETTA.****LAURETTA.**

Let us remain here, my dear Caroline, and talk without constraint — How happy am I to have an opportunity of conversing with you by ourselves—and having it in my power to tell you how much I desire your friendship—

CAROLINE.

Truly, you may obtain it without any difficulty.

LAURETTA.

Mama recommended to me, this morning, to employ all my attention to gain it, but

that order was unnecessary; I only yield to the feelings of my own heart, and do not by any means act from policy, I assure you.— Sometimes, however, *policy* is necessary, as my Governess says, in speaking of Mama, who is always quoted to me for her understanding and address.— But let us return to what we were talking of; I protest to you I shall always love you, I find I shall— My God, how unlucky that we were not educated together— But perhaps you never was sent to a Convent?— No?— How fortunate you are— It is a great happiness never to have left one's mother, is it not?— You are very right, I think as you do— But now let us talk of my brother; let us speak without disguise; will not you give your consent?— You smile; how I love that answer! Yes, it is speaking plain enough; your frank manner delights me; I will make myself worthy of your confidence, you may depend upon it; and since you open your heart to me, I will readily own to you that my brother conceals nothing from me; he is transported with the thoughts of his happiness— he has been in love with you more

than a year. — You are surprised, I know that you have never seen him, but he knows you. — On his way to Strasbourg, he passed by — the estate where you live every summer; is it not in Languedoc? Yes — well, he went a little out of his way that he might pass near your house; he disguised himself in the habit of a Peasant, he saw you several times, he thought you charming, and wrote a letter to me upon the subject! — a most delightful letter! — I will shew it you one day. — My brother is very amiable — I hope he will please you. — There was a young lady at Strasbourg would have been very well pleased to have been married to him; he told me this. She was beautiful as an angel, but my brother was insensible to her charms, because he was in love with you. — And — have you read Sir Charles Grandison? She resembles her there. Yes — that poor lady is become mad, like Clementina, and it is now three years since she has been in that condition — You see what you have occasioned.

CAROLINE.

I own —

LAURETTA.

But tell me what I shall say to my brother when he asks me about your sentiments ?

CAROLINE.

How ?——

LAURETTA.

Nothing !—O that would be too cruel !— I will tell him that you are affected with his constancy. You would not have me say so ?—You must be more reserved.—Your remark is very just. Well, I will avoid being alone with him, that I may not yield to the temptation of telling him the particulars of our conversation.—And the day of your marriage is not yet fixed ?——So much the worse, I wish it was to be to-morrow. Apropos, I have already given directions about my gown for the wedding-day ; it is to be white and lilac.—You do not love lilac. It is true my complexion is very brown, it wont suit me ; you are right, I thank you for your advice. I shall have another ; blue and silver, made in the English taste, re-

lieved in drapery, with spangled tassels.——
Must not the petticoat be trimmed with
white sattin?——With all my heart, I like it
better so too——your advice is very good;
truly you have a fine taste, and——

CAROLINE, *looking at her watch.*

Excuse me, but it is past four o'clock, and
I must leave you——

LAURETTA.

What so soon?——

CAROLINE.

I must go to my mother.

LAURETTA.

Embrace me then. This conversation has
given me a great deal of pleasure: I shall
never forget it; but I shall keep counsel;
you may depend upon it I shall be discreet.
Adieu, my dear Caroline.

CAROLINE *aside.*

Poor Lauretta! —— Ah, how much her

mother is to blame, for not having corrected that odious fault!

LAURETTA.

You was speaking to me, I believe?

CAROLINE.

No; adieu — I cannot stay any longer.
—(*Aside in going out.*) I am concerned for her, and I pity her; but I hope she never will be my sister. (*She goes out.*)

SCENE II.

LAURETTA, *alone.*

She seems much affected — I hope I have gained her friendship; it is but just, for I already love her sincerely, she is so gentle and obliging! how agreeable her conversation! I shall be happy to have such a charming sister-in-law; she will make my brother happy, and I love my brother dearly! — Yes, if this marriage fails now, I shall break my heart.

S C E N E III.

The BARONESS, LAURETTA.

BARONESS.

Lauretta——

LAURETTA.

Mama——

BARONESS.

I was looking for you—I have been told fine things of you—How is this! You contrive stories, you tell lies, and to me too!—

LAURETTA.

What is it you mean, Mama?

BARONESS.

You told me this morning that you knew Miss Belville very well; you said that she was your intimate friend, and yet you had never seen her but once.

LAURETTA.

That is true, Mama — But — I knew her by character — There is one of her cousins in our convent.

BARONESS.

Yes, I know it, else I should suspect you was telling me a new lie: liars lose all title to be believed even when they speak truth. Well, this Cousin has often mentioned her to you?

LAURETTA.

Yes, Mama, she has even shewn me a number of her letters, and I have frequently given some little commissions in charge for Caroline; so that we have a kind of correspondence with each other, and therefore I was not saying what is wrong, when I told you, I knew her.

BARONESS.

You have at least however exaggerated excessively, and that is a great fault; I beg you will never fall into it any more: if it happens again, I assure you you need not expect the same indulgence. You had a long con-

versation with Miss Belville, let me know what she said to you.

LAURETTA.

O, Mama, I am delighted with her—

BARONESS.

How so?

LAURETTA.

I will give you an account of our conversation.

BARONESS.

Well, Lauretta, but no romancing!

LAURETTA.

No, Mama, I will not exaggerate in the least. First of all then, it was I that began the conversation.

BARONESS.

I do not in the least doubt it, for you have a great pleasure in talking.

LAURETTA.

I made her some protestations of friendship; she replied in the most obliging manner; I

cannot repeat the expressions, I will not tell a lie, I do not recollect them, but I remember I was delighted with them: and then, I praised my brother, and she shewed that the encomium pleased her much; however, she immediately begged I would not mention it to my brother; she added, that discretion did not admit of her avowing her sentiments to him as yet.

BARONESS.

She said this.

LAURETTA.

Yes, Mama, word for word——

BARONESS.

Take care, Lauretta; if you lie now, I never shall believe you while I live.

LAURETTA.

Mama, I swear to you, I protest that I have not invented any thing——

BARONESS.

Well then, go on; what did you answer?

LAURETTEA.

Wait a little, Mama, for I am so much afraid of exaggerating—Now I recollect—I promised her the greatest discretion—and at last I mentioned the wedding-day, and told her that I would have a lilac gown; upon which she said that blue would suit me better—

BARONESS.

She entered into these particulars?—

LAURETTA.

Downright; and advised me to have a robe in the English taste, trimmed and relieved with spangled tassels.

BARONESS.

Of all things in the world I wish this account may be true; but Lauretta—

LAURETTA.

Mama, I give you my word of honour that I have not exaggerated one syllable; and the better to convince you of my having spoken truth at this instant, I own to you that I have sometimes the habit of adding a

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little to what I tell, and that I even just now with Caroline, invented a little story to recommend my brother ; but at present, in all I have just now told you, I swear to you I do not think I have lied, nor even exaggerated the least in the world. In short, ask Miss Belville herself, I am sure she will confirm it.

BARONESS.

Come, my girl, I believe you, and you have given me infinite pleasure ; I now look upon your brother's marriage as certain, for Miss Belville can do what she pleases with her mother.

LAURETTA.

Ah, Mama, I forgot to tell you — When she left me, our conversation affected her so, that she had tears in her eyes when she embraced me ; I believe she wished to conceal them, for she went off in a great hurry.

BARONESS.

I hear Belinda's voice : leave us, Lauretta. Lady Belville will bring back her daughter

this evening at eight o'clock for the interview——

LAURETTA.

Mama, you will give orders that I may be informed when she comes.

BARONESS.

Yes surely, go my girl.

LAURETTA, *aside, in going out.*

I am satisfied with myself, for now I have told nothing but the truth. (*She goes out.*)

SCENE IV.

The BARONESS, BELINDA.

BARONESS.

Come, come, my dear Belinda, I have several things to tell you will give you pleasure. And now I believe you will no longer doubt of the success of our affair.

BELINDA.

Lady Belville then has given you a promise,

BARONESS.

No, not yet; but she has given me to understand, that she will leave the decision to her daughter, and I am sure that Miss Belville earnestly wishes for the marriage, and even depends upon it.

BELINDA.

How could you know that positively?

BARONESS.

By Laretta, to whom Miss Belville said so.

BELINDA.

Laretta seems a charming girl, she is gentle, and has a feeling heart; but she is giddy, and I think I have remarked that she does not exactly adhere to the truth in what she tells—She has such a passion for talking—

BARONESS.

That is true, and I have been just now scolding her excessively upon that head. But

on the present occasion, I am certain she has told the exact truth, and with particulars so ingenuous and natural, that I could entertain no doubts. I wanted likewise to tell you, that I have just now received a note from Lady Saint-Alban, to let me know that our man will certainly accept the Government, because he has sent to her to beg that he may be received before the hour appointed, being, as he said, much hurried to conclude the affair.

BELINDA.

So, it is finished then?

BARONESS.

Not yet, because Lady Saint-Alban was obliged to go out, and had settled it so, after the first appointment, that she could not be back before seven o'clock.

BELINDA.

It is now five, so that in two hours we shall know the name of this man, and he will know yours.

BARONESS.

Lady Belville returns at eight o'clock, and I can acquaint her that her daughter shall have a place; all this is arranged to a miracle. You will allow that I have conducted this matter well; I own to you that my vanity is perfectly gratified. You had piqued it this morning by all your fears, and I am not sorry to shew you that there is nothing in which I cannot succeed when I am determined. This woman, whom you represented as so formidable, so penetrating, is truly but very so-so; and with her cold serious manner, she is far from being insensible to praise; besides, I assumed the manner which could best please her; and I assure you she is persuaded that I am the worthiest, the most consistent, and the most ingenuous woman she ever knew.

BELINDA.

I wish that no reverse may come to disturb this intoxication of joy and vanity—But here comes Lifetta, who has certainly some-

thing very important to tell, for she seems
excessively agitated——

SCENE V.

BARONESS, BELINDA, LISETTA.

BARONESS.

What do you want?

LISETTA.

Ah Madam, I have bad news to tell you.

BARONESS.

What is it?

LISETTA.

Miss Laurretta——I am obliged to acquaint
you with it, has hurt you very much with
Lady Belville——

BARONESS.

How?——

LISSETTA.

Lady Belville's maid, who is in your interest, came to give me this information. She heard a conversation between her two mistresses, in which Miss Caroline said to her mother, that Miss Laurretta had told her a thousand lies; that she had spoken the whole time without having left her a possibility of answering one word; in short, Miss Caroline added, that Miss Laurretta, by her lies and indiscretions, had given her the most disagreeable and best-founded prejudices against you, Madam, and against your family.

BARONESS.

Call Laurretta hither—I am so provoked—

BELINDA.

Be moderate——hold, here she comes——
What a hurry she is in——What is she going to tell us?

S C E N E VI.

BARONESS, BELINDA, LAURETTA,
LISETTA.

LAURETTA, *out of breath.*

Mama, mama—I have made the most important discovery—

BARONESS.

Hold your tongue. I too have made a discovery, that you are a monster of falsehood, and that you disgrace your family by the meanest and most odious of all vices—

LAURETTA.

O heaven! —Mama, I did not lie the last time you heard me; I protest to you—

BARONESS.

Get out of my sight; you strike me with horror — Miss Belville is enraged against

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you, and all that you told me of her is one continued series of lies.

LAURETTA.

Good heaven!——I must have lied then without knowing it, for I swear to you, Mama——

BARONESS.

Prepare to return to your convent this instant.

LAURETTA.

But hear me first, Mama, I conjure you: I have the most important information to give you——

BARONESS.

I wonder at your assurance; how dare you even bear that I should look at you?

LAURETTA.

Your anger and my repentance oppress me; but I must speak——

BARONESS.

Once more, I say, hold your tongue; I command you not to pronounce a single syllable——

LAURETTA *aside*.

Ah, what a punishment!—

BARONESS.

Come, Belinda, let us see what measures
can be taken—Come. (*She goes out.*)

SCENE VII.

BELINDA, LAURETTA, LISETTA.

LAURETTA, *stopping Belinda*.

Ah, Madam, for pity's sake, one moment.

BELINDA.

Let me go, I will not listen to you.

LAURETTA.

The interest of my mother—and that
of my brother.—

BELINDA.

What useful advice can you give at your
age.

LAURETTA.

I discovered it by chance.—

BELINDA.

You are young; correct this disgraceful vice, and lament the sad consequences of it; that is all I can say to you. (*She wants to go out.*)

LAURETTA, *still stopping her.*

Madam—Madam—hear me.—

BELINDA.

Truly you are mad: Lisetta, I beg of you to take her off me.—

LISETTA, *tearing away the hands of Lauretta from Belinda's gown.*

Have done, Miss; your head is turned, I believe.

LAURETTA.

Ah, what violence!—Madam—

BELINDA.

Lisetta, keep her there.—(*She goes out.*)

S C E N E VIII.

LAURETTA, LISETTA.

LAURETTA.

Madam——She has escaped from me——
how unhappy I am. —— Well, Lisetta, I
have no hope left, but in you.——

LISETTA.

Ah, Miss, no stories, for heaven's sake.

LAURETTA.

What, Lisetta, will you likewise refuse to
hear me?

LISETTA.

Upon my faith, Miss, tho' I am only my
Lady's maid, I have no greater desire for
lies than Madam Belinda.

LAURETTA.

I deserve all these humiliations —— but

Lisetta, do not drive me to despair; I am but fifteen, I have been badly educated; pity me, and depend upon it, this terrible lesson has cured me for life.

L I S E T T A.

O, that language gives me pleasure —

L A U R T T A.

Hear me, then —

L I S E T T A.

Hey. hey — what, at it again?

L A U R E T T A.

Good God! see my tears, see the condition I am in; can you suspect me at this instant of having any desire to invent a story? —

L I S E T T A.

Alas, Miss, habit has so much got the better of you, that I am convinced you often tell lies without intending it.

LAURETTA:

Time flies — and in a little, the information I want to give, will be useless! Ah, Lisetta, if you are capable of pity, once more let me speak; must I beg it on my knees; there is nothing I would not do for my brother. Lisetta, my dear Lisetta, let me prevail with you. — (*She falls upon her knees.*)

LISETTA, *raising her up.*

Good God, Miss, what are you doing? The daughter of my Mistress at my feet, to beg that I would hear her! — Ah, my dear Miss, see to what excessive humiliation some faults lead! I, to whom your confidence would do so much honour, if you were what you should be, must be humbly intreated to prevail with me to hear you. — Excuse this reflection, I only make it for your good; your grief and your tears have restored all my respect for you. Speak, Miss, speak, I will hear you.

LAURETTA.

Alas! the hour is at hand, and we have not a moment to lose. You know that my Governess's daughter, is maid to Lady Saint-Alban!

LISSETTA.

Yes.

LAURETTA.

Well, she came about an hour ago to see her mother, and finding that she was not at home, asked for me, and told me, that her mistress had entrusted her with an affair, which would insure the success of my brother's marriage, and it would be determined this evening at seven o'clock.

LISSETTA.

I beg your pardon, Miss, but it is not very probable that this maid would acquaint you with the secrets of her mistress.

LAURETTA.

But she knows me very well, and came constantly to see me at the Convent. Be-

fides, she thought to make a merit of it with me, by telling a secret, which seemed to her of no great importance, since it would cease to be a secret this evening.

L I S E T T A.

I must observe to you——

L A U R E T T A.

For heaven's sake, do not interrupt me — This girl told me then, that a man of her mistress's acquaintance will renounce a place in exchange for a Government, which Mama is to obtain for him; this man is to come this evening, at seven o'clock, to Lady Saint-Alban's; he does not know Mama's name, and she is ignorant of his, and——

L I S E T T A.

Let me die, Miss, if I can comprehend one word of all this history——

L A U R E T T A.

This man is Mr. Mirvan; which is what the maid told me; you must be sensible that when he hears Mama's name, he will be quite furious, since——

L I S E T T A.

Well, has not my Lady promised a Government to Mr. Mirvan; he is to have it, why then should he be angry?—

L A U R E T T A.

But you have not listened to me?

L I S E T T A.

I was a little absent, I own—

L A U R E T T A.

My God, what a trial! — my patience is worn out. — Lifetta, I conjure you go and find my mother; tell her only that this unknown person of Lady Saint-Alban's, is Mr. Mirvan, and let her go instantly to Lady Saint-Alban, to beg she will not name her, otherwise my brother's marriage will be irrecoverably broken off. — Go, my dear Lifetta, I intreat you—

L I S E T T A.

My Lady will receive me very badly.—

LAURETTA.

But she will hearken to you; tell her that —

L I S E T T A.

What shall I tell her? — That Mr. Mirvan will not have the Government.

LAURETTA.

You put me to the torture; truly you kill me —

L I S E T T A.

Hold, here is Madam Belinda; give her this commission; for my part, Miss, I cannot undertake it.

SCENE IX.

BELINDA, LAURETTA, LISETTA.

BELINDA.

Come, my dear Lauretta, I have obtained your pardon; your mother consents to see you, and to embrace you.

LAURETTA.

Madam, I have told Lisetta what I had to say; allow her to tell it to you—

BELINDA.

So, you are going to begin again? —
Eh, my God, learn to hold your tongue —

LAURETTA.

Madam, the marriage is broken off, if I am not listened to—

BELINDA.

Well, I am charged by your mother to impose an absolute silence on you. If you speak one word, a single word, I leave you—

You have not opened your mouth since morning, but to tell stories that have not the least foundation, and to lie with a degree of assurance beyond all example: how then can you hope to be believed, or even listened to one moment?—Hush, then, your pardon is only upon these conditions—What tears—what sobbings.—To remain silent then is a dreadful torment to you?—I never saw the like—

LAURETTA, *looking at her watch.*

It is a quarter past seven!—It is all over, I may be silent now without any effort—the information I wanted to give is no longer of any use—O brother, I could not then be of any use to you!—

BELINDA.

What was she going to say?—But I hear the Baronefs; come, Lauretta, and meet her.

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SCENE X.

BARONESS, BELINDA, LAURETTA,
LISETTA.

BARONESS.

Ah, Belinda! ——— what an accident! ———
All is broke off ———

BELINDA.

What has happened? ———

BARONESS.

By a note from Lady Saint-Alban, I am informed of what I did not in the least suspect ——— She told my name to the unknown person, who immediately rose, and quitted her in a rage ———

BELINDA.

And why so?

BARONESS.

You will easily understand, when I tell you that this man was Mr. Mirvan himself ———

BELINDA.

O heaven!

LAURETTA.

O Mama, that is what I wanted to inform you of; I knew it——

L I S E T T A.

Yes, I must give evidence to the truth; Miss Lauretta told it to me——I own that I scarcely hearkened to her, and I refused to inform you of the particulars.

BARONESS.

She knew it?——

LAURETTA.

Yes, Mama, Lady Saint-Alban's maid told it to me; I understood the full importance of the discovery, but you would not hear me.

BARONESS.

See then the consequence of that detestable vice which governs you——It was in your power to give me the most important intelligence;

you could have rendered an essential service to your brother, but you are so despised, that nobody will condescend to believe you. In short, the truth from your mouth can neither persuade nor indeed even be hearkened to; and because it comes from you, is mistaken and confounded with imposture.

LAURETTA.

Ah, Mama, spare your unhappy daughter; having been oppressed these two hours with the deepest sorrow, I said to myself every thing with which you can reproach me. Yes, I had an odious vice which strikes me with horror, and which I now detest; but at least condescend to believe, that if I had been made acquainted with the dreadful consequences sooner, if I had always had the happiness of being under the eye of my mother, I would not have been this day slighted by her, odious to myself, and contemned by all around me——O, Mama, you kept me at a distance from you——your unhappy daughter was unknown to you——do not then drive me to despair, by loading me with your disdain

and hatred—No, I am not contemptible—I feel that I am not—and if my repentance cannot affect my mother, and she would still aggravate my excessive humiliation—yes—I may then perhaps presume, in my turn, to complain of the education I have received, and accuse only her of my faults and my misfortunes.

BELINDA, *aside*.

Dreadful reproach!—and which is but too well deserved.

BARONESS.

What, so far forget yourself!—Begone.

LAURETTA.

Ah, pardon me, Mama—I implore your compassion.

BARONESS.

You do not deserve it; begone I say—Lifetta, follow her.—

LAURETTA, *in going*.

Ah, how I am to be pitied! —

(*She goes out with Lifetta.*)

SCENE XI.

BARONESS, BELINDA.

BELINDA.

Truly you treat her too severely.

BARONESS.

I own I am distracted.

BELINDA.

So, here is a strange reverse!—Mr. Mirvan was the unknown person; but he is not the friend of Lady Saint-Alban; he has no daughter?—

BARONESS.

On purpose to prevent suspicion, he begged Lady Saint-Alban to add these two circumstances which have misled me, and the place which he had obtained was for his niece—

BELINDA.

For this same Miss Belville on whose account you wanted it——What an extraordinary accident!——

(Enter a Servant bringing a note to the Baronefs.)

SERVANT.

From Lady Belville, Madam.

BARONESS.

Very well——*(The Servant goes out, and the Baronefs reads the note.)*

BELINDA, *aside*.

I can easily guess the contents of that note.

BARONESS, *having read it*.

I expected it——She gives me back my promise, and breaks off entirely.

BELINDA.

Ah, my dear Baronefs, I foretold it to you; you are the victim of your own arts. What a deal of trouble lost! What injurious subtleties!——In the most important affair of

your life, art and evasion have ruined, what rectitude alone would have accomplished; open your eyes then, and see that people can fail from intrigue itself; that in public as well as private affairs, sincerity is equally useful and amiable; that they who trust to intrigue, will never have but transient success; and with equal abilities, the man of honour, candid in his dealings, and inviolable in his promises, will disconcert their stratagems, expose their intrigues, and always carry his point against them.

BARONESS.

Yes—I have committed a great fault; before suffering myself to be named, I should have discovered who the unknown person was; that is what I repent of—It is needless to think any more of that business; I must now attend to the Government—I have several confused schemes in my head about it—I must go to Lady Saint-Alban—she has not served me well; I suspect some treachery—I will no longer trust to any one—this has taken a turn by no means natural. My eyes open by degrees—Surely

you must have been guilty of some indiscretion. You have shewn so *great an affection* for Lady Belville—However, in the end I shall perhaps be able to penetrate the mystery of this strange plot. I am at least very glad you know I am not altogether the dupe. Adieu. Excuse me for leaving you ; but I must absolutely go, and I cannot delay any longer. (*She goes out.*)

BELINDA, *alone.*

I am quite confounded!——So, she has at last unmasked herself: Such mean and contemptible vanity! Such a false and suspicious mind. Ah, what a horrid thing is the heart of a professed intriguer. They are right to wear a mask; who could look at them uncovered without disgust and indignation?—I must leave this house, where so many obscure plots are formed; where nothing is heard but lies and deceit. Ah, let me leave it, never more to return. (*She goes out.*)

END of the SECOND VOLUME.

You must have been guilty of some indiscre-
tion. You have thrown up an affair
too early. But, however, in the end I
shall perhaps be able to penetrate the mystery
of this strange plot. I am at least very glad
you know I am not altogether without
Adieu. Excuse me for leaving you, but I
must absolutely go, and I cannot delay any
longer. (Exit)

I am quite confounded!—So, for the last
last unmasked herself! Such a man and com-
temptible vanity! Such a false and suspicious
mind! Ah, what a horrid thing is the heart
of a protected person! They are right to
wear a mask. What a terrible suspicion!
I must have been very foolish. I must have
been very foolish. I must have been very foolish.
but his and she. Ah, let me leave
never more to return. (Exit)



End of the Second Volume